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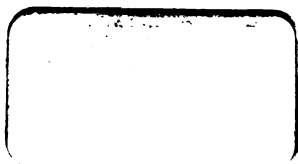
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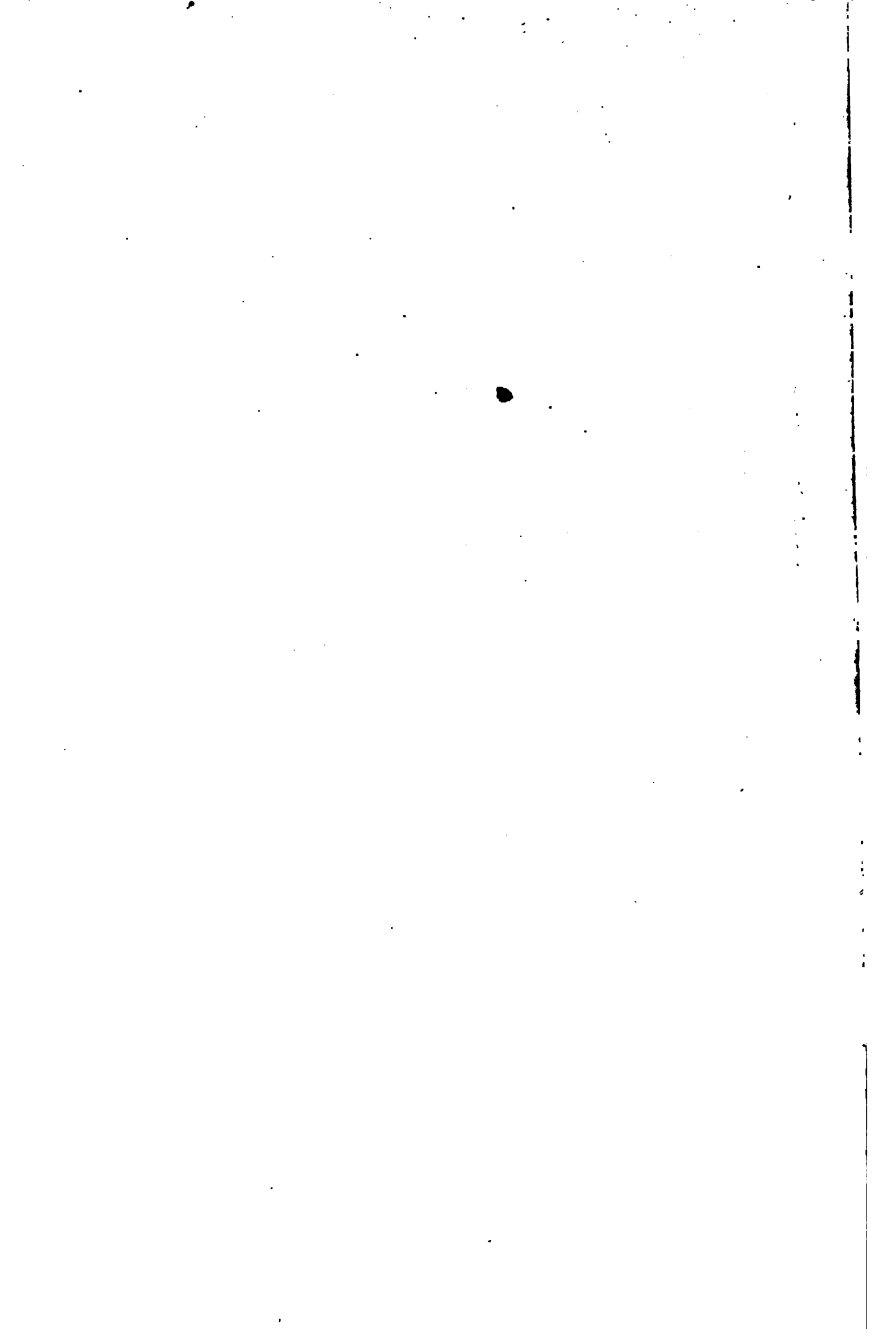
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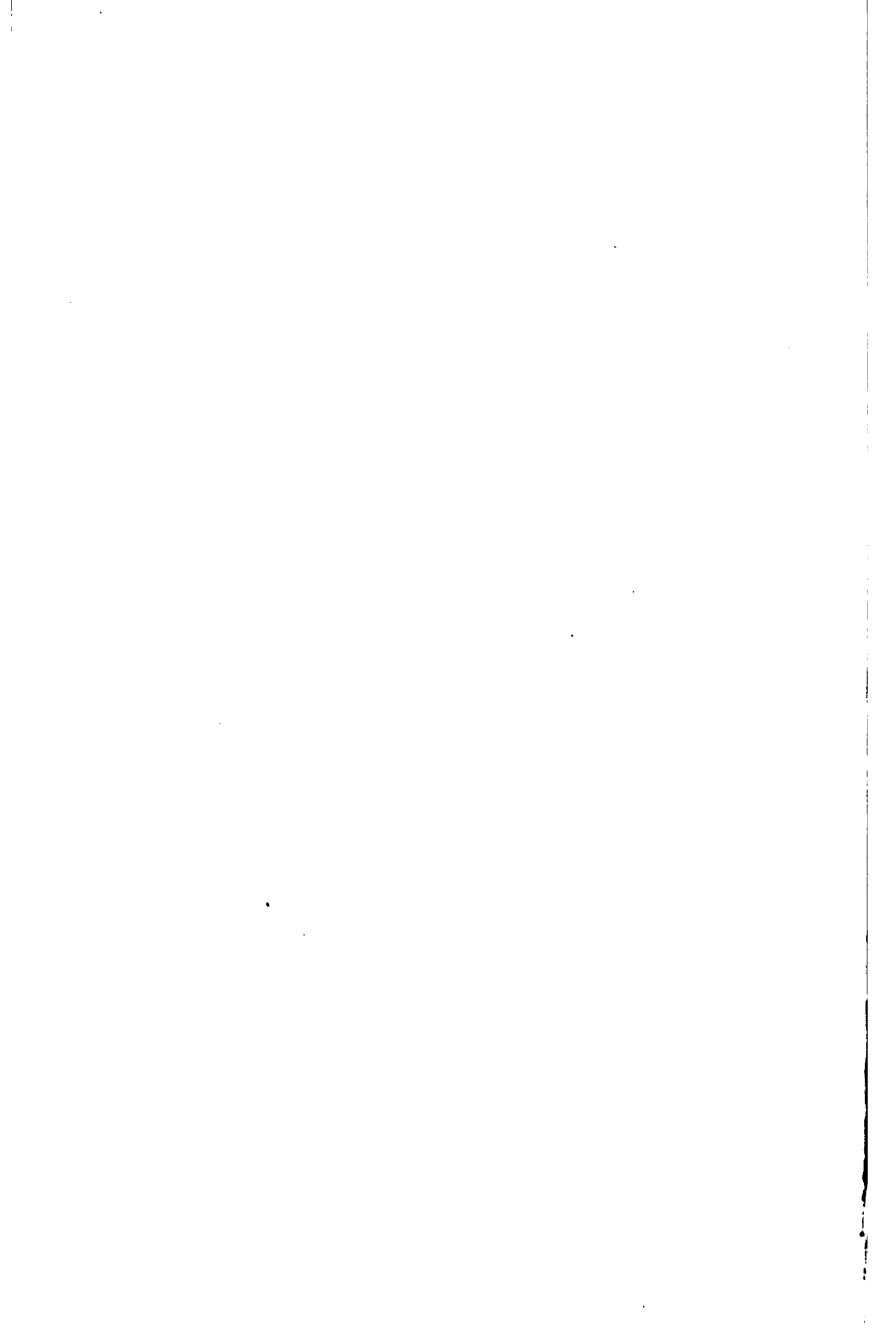
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OUR CYCLING TOUR
IN ENGLAND





WEST GATE AND FALSTAFF INN, CANTERBURY.

R CYCLING TOUR IN ENGLAND

FROM

STONY LARTMOOR FOREST, A
6. B. WAY OF RATH, ON LOND
AND THE THAMES VALLEY

BY

RUBEN GOLD THWATTES

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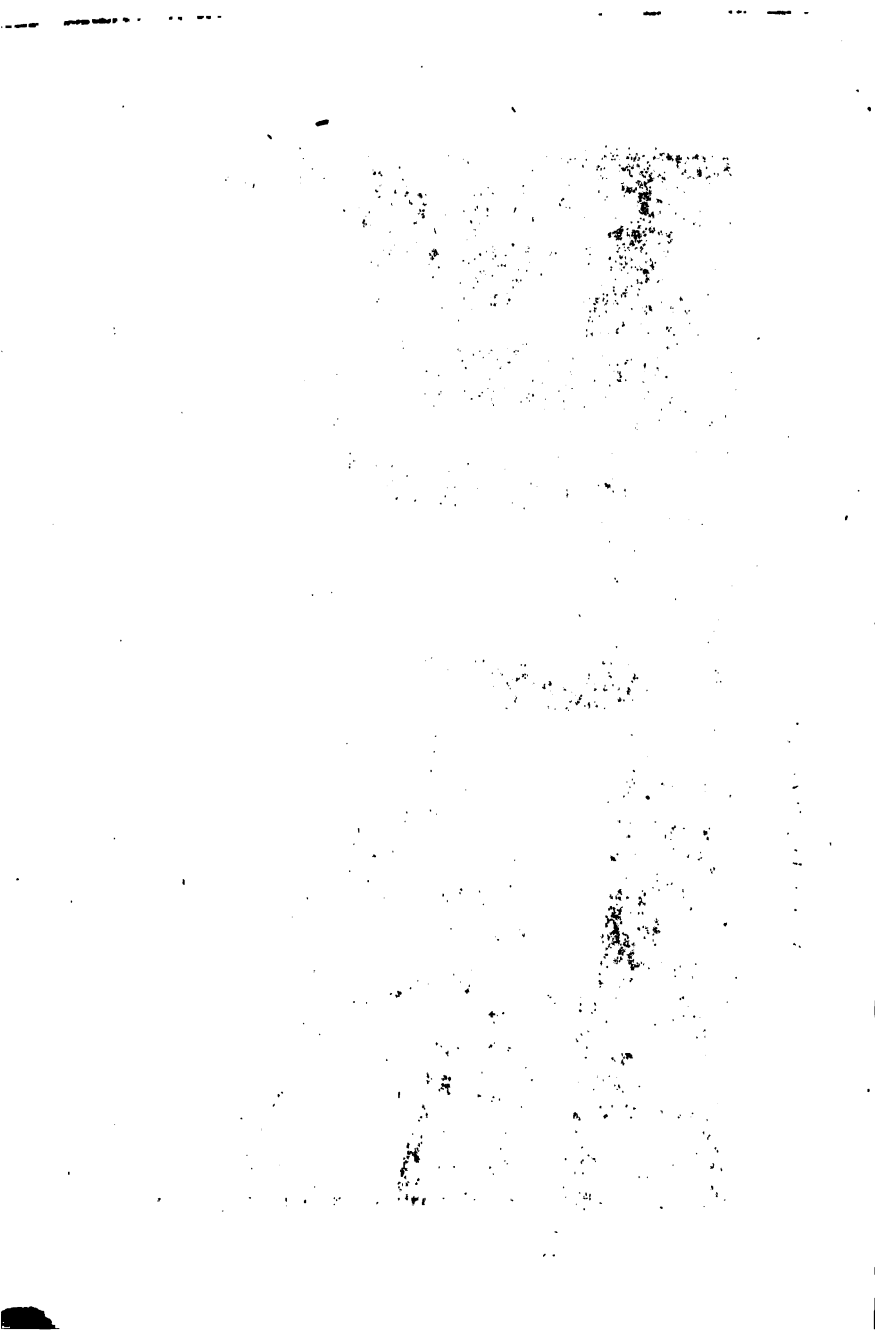
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CHICAGO

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1892



OUR CYCLING TOUR IN ENGLAND

FROM

CANTERBURY TO DARTMOOR FOREST, AND
BACK BY WAY OF BATH, OXFORD
AND THE THAMES VALLEY

BY

REUBEN GOLD THWAITES

SECRETARY OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN, AUTHOR
OF "THE COLONIES, 1492-1750," "HISTORIC WATERWAYS"
"THE STORY OF WISCONSIN," ETC.

Illustrated

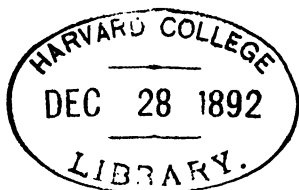


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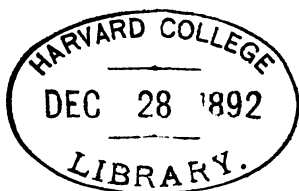


Mary Orquod Ouel

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BY REUBEN GOLD THWAITES
A.D. 1892

To my Mother

*This little journal of vacation ramblings in her
native land is fondly inscribed.*



Mary Begood Fund

PREFACE.

I HAVE not sought to make a guide-book of this journal of our little tour through southern England; there are an abundance of such already, and very good ones. But having taken a somewhat novel trip, both as to route and conveyances, and seen some phases of the country and people at closer range than, unfortunately, the majority of our fellow-countrymen abroad have the opportunity for, I thought a recital of our experiences might not be altogether lacking in interest. We had no exciting adventures, wife and I; life went smoothly with us the six weeks we were in the saddle, coursing along English highways and byways, and lovingly touching elbows with English rural life; there is little in this matter-of-fact record of our daily goings and

doings that can be called exhilarating, and yet we have never had another tour so replete with pleasure. A canoe ties one down to a restricted and secluded path; riding or driving on a foreign tour has practical drawbacks, and is expensive; a tricycle is a weary grind; a bicycle alone gives one the best imaginable exercise, outruns canoe or horse, involves no cost of keep, enables one to meander at will, to linger or to fly as fancy dictates. By no other conveyance is one so independent in action, so free from care, or so thoroughly in communion with folk and Nature.

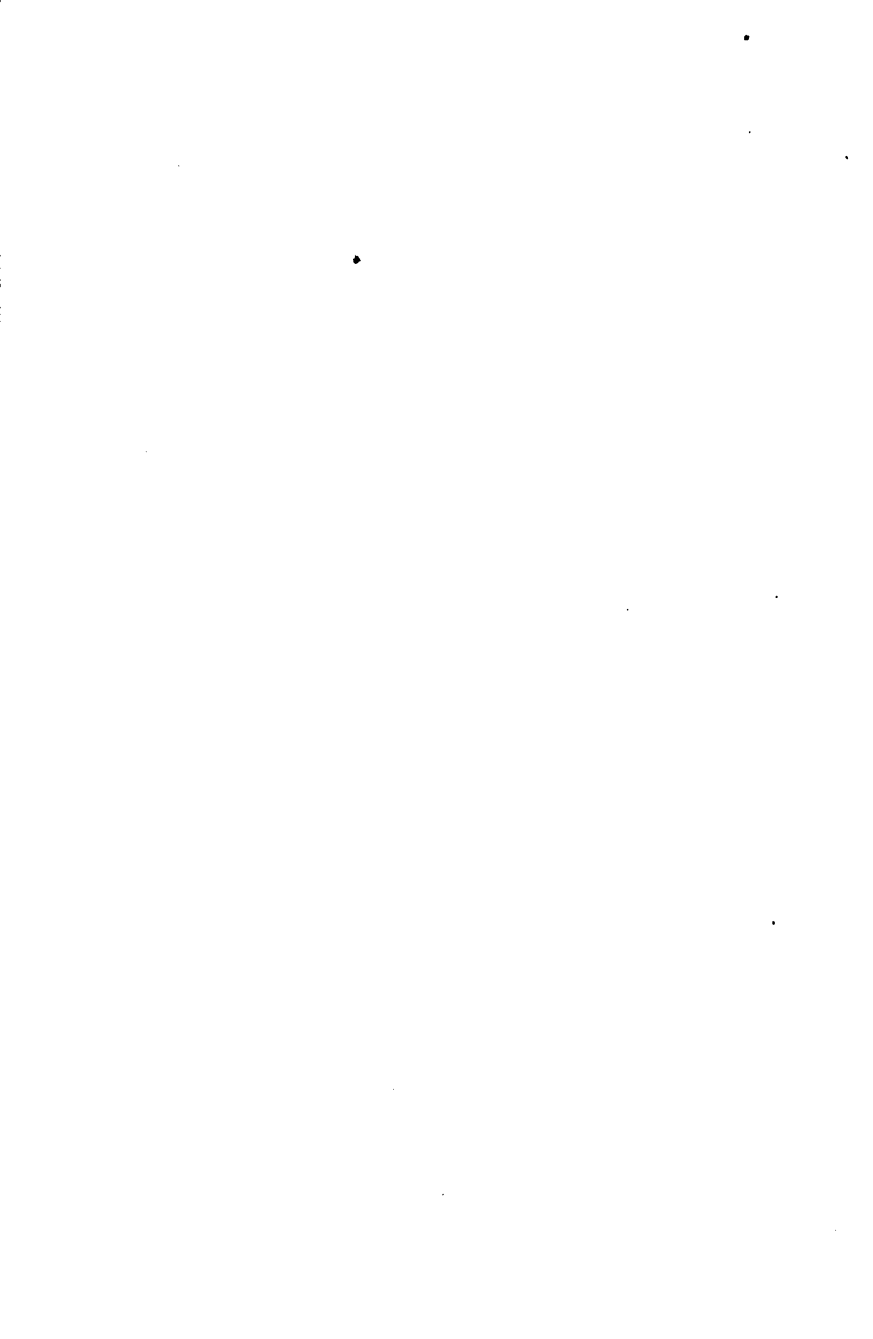
I have sought to be a faithful reporter of what we saw and heard; but the passing traveller in any land can do nothing more than record surface indications that to the native may not seem fairly typical. American books about England are apt to be quite as amusing to Englishmen as their books about America are to us.

This is inevitable; and yet I fancy the foreigner may often be nearer the mark than the native in picturing national characteristics.

The greater part of chapter vi. is embraced in my article in "The New England Magazine" for May, 1892, entitled "Village Life in Old England." I am under obligations to the publishers of that magazine for permission to reproduce it in this volume.

REUBEN GOLD THWAITES.

MADISON, WIS.,
September, 1892.



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OUR CYCLING TOUR IN ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

IN KENT.

CATERHAM, SURREY, *Monday, May 18, 1891.* We have been in England for a month, W—— and I, visiting friends in London and in suburban Surrey. It is most delightful, this inspection of English men and English women at close range, this enjoyment of their charming hospitality ; but the summer is now at hand, and it is necessary that we bestir ourselves from delicious idling if we are to carry out our programme of cycling through the southern and middle counties.

CANTERBURY, *Tuesday, 19th.* "You excitable Americans, you know, are always on the go, tearing up and down our little island, and we suppose there is no use at all of trying to induce you to stay quiet and enjoy yourselves." With such kind protests against our

transatlantic views of tourists' duty, we were bidden Godspeed.

Our cycling muscles are weak after a winter of disuse, and it is always good policy to begin a wheeling tour cautiously. The Surrey hills are rather steep even for practised legs, and so we have come down here by train, to get an easy start over the Kentish plain.

CANTERBURY, *Thursday, 21st.* In spite of all we had read about Canterbury, it was a surprise to find it so interestingly quaint. The city is literally filled with old timbered shops and dwellings, their projecting upper stories and doorposts and floors sadly out of plumb and level. Tavern-signs which smack of Elizabethan times abound on every hand, and the courtyards of some of the inns cannot have been materially altered since Shakespeare was in the flesh. So much of the olden architecture remains that in some of the blocks a modern building is noticeable from its rarity. The cathedral, St. Martin's Church, St. Dunstan's Church, St. Augustine's Monastery, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, West Gate, Falstaff Inn,—such a cloud of antiquities and stirring memories here envelops one that it requires but slight effort of the imagination to repeople these narrow streets and darkling lanes with the throngs which sought Becket's shrine, and of whom Chaucer so merrily sung. Had we needed inspiration for the enjoyment of things enduringly English, we should certainly have gained it here.

We have been busy packing to-night. Our cabin trunk goes by "goods train" to Alton, over in Hampshire, where we anticipate spending four or five days

with friends ; by sending it on ahead of us from time to time, we shall hope to get at its contents about every ten days. A stout canvas bag we book as a "train parcel" to Hastings ; as it contains changes of linen, our aim is to reach it perhaps twice each week. Upon our machines we shall carry luggage enough for immediate need. W——, on her American lady's-safety, has improvised a carrier just behind the saddle, which supports a goodly bundle carefully wrapped in a square of mackintosh ; and to her care, as well, falls the lunch-basket, also encased in rubber cloth, for one must prepare for possible daily showers while in the United Kingdom. On my own safety, purchased the other day from a Coventry maker, I have at front a newly devised cyclist's satchel, which is the best and most capacious luggage-carrier I have yet seen. Our two umbrellas are strapped lengthwise on either side of the saddle, after the fashion of carbine-carriers on the English army cycles, while our mackintosh coats and leggings and my photograph camera are conveniently at hand. Our outfit is rather formidable, I admit ; but as we are to be nearly two months away from our base of supplies, and must make ready for all manner of weather, thermometrically and barometrically, and with costumes adapted, as occasion demands, both to visiting and wheeling, I cannot see that we can well do with less.

As I passed through the courtyard just now in the twilight, to arrange with the smiling bar-maid for an early breakfast, the ostler was rubbing down and oiling our steeds in a box stall, while the chamber-maid and "Boots" looked admiringly on over the half-door. "'Pears to me, Joe," said Boots, "as

'ow the lyedy an' gent's a roonawye coople, an' 's carr'n' their 'ouse 'long wi' 'em."

"Thee 's a born ijit, Dyve, thee be's," responded the ostler, contemptuously, as with a rheumatic sigh he arose and wiped his perspiring brow with the back of his shirt-sleeve; "they's reg'l'r nuff, but I heer'n Bill, the waiter, a-tell'n' o' Cook as 'ow he know'd 'em for 'Mericans immedjate, for the young missus ordered on a pitcher o' cold wahter at breakfas',— and that's 'Merican every time, he says; and he ought to know, as he's served towrists oop in Wyles, where they set a joog o' wahter on every mornin' for breakfas', there 's so many 'Mericans as comes that wye. They drinks wahter wi' their victuals, and says 'pitcher' w'en they means 'joog,' an' all that wye o' talkin' an' do'n', you know, though I un'erstan' as 'ow they pertends to talk English o'er there in 'Merica, but I be blymed if I can un'erstan' 'em mysel' soomtoimes. No, they's 'Mericans, strytle 'noof, joost a-towerin' the coountry, loike; an' 't's mighty soon they'll give it oop too, a-cartin' all this stoof areound."

ASHFORD, *Friday, 22d.* The sun was shining brightly through our ancient latticed window when the maid aroused us this morning at Canterbury. The crackling fire on the coffee-room hearth was most cheering, for there had been frost in the air over night. It was comfortable to toast one's feet on the iron dogs, and coffee and chops were the more grateful because piping hot from the kitchen range. We were in proper mood to start upon our quest of the old and the beautiful.

They saw us off at the archway of the inn with much

good-humored curiosity and many hearty well-wishes, — the landlady in front, in immaculate cap and all bows and smiles, bringing out the visitors' book at the last moment, to receive our autographic commendations of her establishment; by her side the blushing bar-maid, capped and aproned, red-cheeked and frizzle-haired, her buxom arms akimbo; the side-whiskered head waiter, in a greasy, shiny dress-suit, that had apparently done duty these many long years of service, a towel over his left arm, and rubbing his hands in gleeful remembrance of our tip; the chamber-maid and cook, on tiptoes, overlooking the heads of the others, and modestly expectant of largess; while Joe, the ostler, and Dave, the boots, bravely held the machines for us to mount, and seemed proud to have the last word with the departing guests.

It is only in England that May mornings are as soft and balmy as this on which we wheeled out of Canterbury to the southwest. We were sadly out of practice on our machines, and having no knowledge of what topographical difficulties we might meet, were uncertain and indeed indifferent as to where the night of our first day on wheels might overtake us. Going forth in true gypsying spirit, we struck out up the broad valley of the Great Stour, and in a quarter of an hour from our inn were beyond the city walls and encompassed by fields.

For the first few miles of the tortuous highway, which was as smooth as an asphalt walk, we had, over the hedge-rows, charming retrospective views of the cathedral, its square gray tower and western spires, rising far above the solid bank of neighboring red-tiled roofs. To the right, and sometimes to the left,

the Stour, spanned by graceful bridges of stone and brick, wound blithely through green meadows, from which skylarks rose in quick succession as we whizzed along, and losing themselves in the azure, poured down upon us floods of bewitching melody.

Much of the country is devoted to hop-gardens. The tops of the poles are often tied together with cords to keep them upright in wind-storms, and the effect is as if a gigantic cobweb covered the plantation; while down below, groups of women, girls, and boys are busy weeding the young vines, now a foot in height, and giving them a preliminary twist about the poles. Square and circular drying-kilns, with conical iron ventilators at the top, twirled by the wind, are frequent. Hedges everywhere abound, — great solid, interminable banks of green, which cut the country up into a sort of gigantic checker-board, with the various enclosures all imaginable shapes, from round to square.¹ Every field, large or small, has its particular name, and has doubtless borne that name and been of that shape for hundreds of years, — some of them since Domesday Book. May seems to be the chief hedge-plant hereabout; and the season being late, it is just coming into bloom, the emerald background being in spots splashed with great masses of white flowers, which load the air with delicate perfume, while the grassy bank below is spangled with white and purple blossoms, chiefly daisies and mint.

By and by we begin to mount the upland, and have a comprehensive panorama at our feet, — wide-stretching meadows, vividly green, on which horses

¹ An English agricultural friend writes me that "these curious-shaped fields contain uniform soil."

and cattle are peacefully grazing, as well as great flocks of sheep as yet unshorn, and bearing upon their burly backs rude stripes of red ochre, the brand of their owner; gracefully outlined, sombre-wooded hills, divided by vales, deep down in whose peaceful depths course feeders to the ocean-bound Stour, which sluggishly glistens upon the horizon of the lower level; white footpaths wind through the broad meadows up to where rises the curling smoke of forest hamlets, each with its square Norman tower lifting its hoary head above the tree-tops.

We pass farm buildings, broad-spreading and prosperous in appearance, and groups of laborers' cottages, often whitewashed, each with its front yard gay with flowers, and with roses luxuriantly clambering over the doors and windows. We spin through villages, — Thantington, Milton, Chartham, Kennington, — each with its one long straggling street, cottages and shops commingled, flanked by the smithy's forge and the public-house. The neat appearance of the villages is their most striking feature in the eyes of Americans. Nearly every building is the cottage of a farm laborer or a mechanic. The yards are scrupulously kept free from litter; the wealth of vegetation in this moist climate soon hides from view whatever needs be hidden. In place of our crude American fences and buildings of wood, that, neglected, soon tumble into unsightly ruin, the English use brick and stone, which endure for centuries, and grow more beautiful with the passing years. Each village is a most charming study in red and green, — red brick, red chimney-pots, red tiles, red lichens carpeting the light-gray stone, and everywhere these masses of glowing red embow-

ered in greenery, moss on the roofs and ivy on the walls.

In the villages, or in front of the places of the wealthy, great stone boundary walls, seven, eight, and ten feet in height, often take the place of hedges; they are of dressed flints and red brick, and among the forbidding masses of broken glass which are embedded in mortar on the top, dandelions and daisies frequently have found lodgement, like garlands in the hat of the sentinel.

Now and then we meet a flock of sheep shuffling up a dense cloud of dust, and dismount to let them pass, for one might as well attempt to wheel through a stone wall as a drove of Southdowns; while the shepherd, plodding stolidly behind, cries out a cheery but muffled "Thankee, sir! thankee!" from amid the stifling fog.

At the numerous forks and cross-roads — for our invaluable ordnance-survey map presents a perfect tangle of highways — the finger-posts interest us, with their references to quaintly named hamlets off our path, — "Penny Pot" was one, for instance, and "Old Wives" another.

It was half-past five in the afternoon, and time for dinner, when at last we wheeled through the inviting archway of the inn at Ashford. We have made only seventeen miles from Canterbury; but it is our first day out, and, we stopped to take our lunch by the wayside, to talk with the people, and leisurely to enjoy the country. We are not at all anxious to break the cycling record; that is not what we came out for.

NORTHAM, SUSSEX, *Saturday, 23d.* Ashford (ten thousand inhabitants) has a few very old timbered

houses and a rather fine parish church with a Perpendicular tower ; but the prevailing odor is of railway shops, not antiquity, the Southeastern Company's extensive works being located there.

We made thirty-six and a half miles to-day, and had an abundance of time to study both country and people. On our road from Ashford to here lay the villages — mere hamlets, some of them — of Great Chart, Bethersden, High Halden, Tenterden, Rolvenden, and Newenden.

Laborers' and mechanics' cottages prevail. They are charming little pictures without, with their sash curtains, trim gardens, and wealth of climbers over wall and roof. Not all are so pleasant within. We stopped for water at one of them this afternoon, right thirsty from toiling in the blazing sunshine. Unlike the majority, which are in blocks of from two to a dozen, under one long roof, the eaves to the road, this cottage, with its wealth of yellow thatch, stood alone in the midst of perhaps a quarter of an acre of land. There were to the front fruit-trees in blossom, and little box hedges checkering the dainty flower-garden ; while to the rear were a vegetable patch, a poultry-yard, a half-dozen conical straw beehives, and a stone cowhouse, gray with mosses. It seemed safe enough to seek refreshment in so tasteful a bower. In response to our raps, a black-eyed, sharp-nosed little woman in a white cap and apron came around the corner of the house to look us over, and then disappearing to the back, soon unbolted and unchained the front door from within, and with much courtesying and rubbing of hands ushered us into the general living-room. There was a quaint deep-set fireplace,

within which hung an iron pot on a formidable iron crane. An old tall clock ticked softly on one side of the hearth, and on the other a rude settle stood at right angles with the wall. There were, besides, a cheap modern table spread with white oil-cloth, three or four high-backed chairs that might have come down from the days of Cromwell; on the low grimy wall, a set of hanging shelves for crockery and pewter; a black and bulky chest of drawers, which possibly came long ago from some auction sale of "quality" furniture, — all picturesque enough in their place, but here only heightening the prevailing aspect of damp, dingy, dirty gloom. The water, brought in a rude earthen jug, was streaked white and green with motes and vegetable matter; it came from the pond behind the house, the woman said. We had seen ducks swimming in the little brackish pool as we came in, and but made a pretence of drinking. Is it any wonder that these people drink beer, and marvel at our request for water?

The Chequers Inn,¹ at High Halden, is one of the most charming old hostelrys to the outer view that we have yet seen in England. Set back from the highway, with a broad gravelled drive leading to its door, roses and ivy clinging profusely to its white stone walls, a line of lead-glazed lattice windows indicating the bar, and by the great square entrance a shaded bench on which carters were resting over their tankards, it was indeed a picturesque bit, such as we were glad we had come across seas to contemplate.

¹ Two hundred years ago taverns were indicated by a post in front, painted in a red and white checker pattern. This is why so many English inns still bear the name of The Chequers.

Along the road to-day, we encountered numerous strings of great black and bay "shire" horses, — always a groom on the front animal, the others following *à l'escalier*, tied together by both neck and tail. They are evidently going to a fair. It is the law of the road for cyclists to "give audible and sufficient warning of approach," when overtaking cavalcades of this character. At the gentle tinkle of our bells, the horses would rear a little fore and aft, and lightly snort as we went cautiously by their quivering hulks, the groom touching his cap in that silent, deferential way so characteristic of the working classes in rural England. What fine horses we see everywhere on our journey! At the plough, the cart, or the carriage, it is all the same, — fine, glossy, large, well-bred beasts, never in a great hurry, but solid and sure, like the British themselves.

Tenterden is a long, straggling, pretty village, evidently with something of a market. The market-place, like that of many of the villages we pass through, is the "high street" spread out to about the width of Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, — a good shouting distance across. We pass the fine old parish church to our left, as we emerge from the place, its Perpendicular spire springing high above the surrounding trees. It has for centuries been a saying among common Kentish folk that "Tenterden steeple was the cause of Goodwin Sands." Monkish tradition has it that these dangerous sandbanks off the eastern coast of Kent were once an island belonging to the great Earl Goodwin. The countrymen say that certain funds designed for a sea-wall for the island were expended by the monks in building this steeple on

the mainland, and that later, for want of this wall, the island was the victim of a "sodaine and mighty inundation of the sea."

There has, however, been another version, to the effect that the steeple is responsible in this same fashion for the filling up of Sandwich Haven. In the dialogues of Sir Thomas More, at an assembly of "old folk of the cuntre," one "good old father" is telling of the baneful effect of Tenterden steeple. "'Why hath the stepell hurt the haven, good father?' quod they. 'Nay, by'r Lady, Maysters,' quod he, 'ych cannot tell you why, but chote well yt hath; for by —, I knew that a good haven tyll the stepell was bylded, and by the Mary masse, cha marked yt never throve synnys.'"

Our road to-day was over undulating country, — a good many long walks up hill, but also quite as many jolly spins down. At four o'clock in the afternoon, taking a sudden dip, we came upon the broad green meadows of the river Rother, — an insignificant stream that in broader lands would be styled a creek. Sweeping through the rather untidy little hamlet of Newenden on the Kentish side, we passed over a narrow bridge of brick and stone into Sussex. A hill or two more to climb, and three miles beyond the border we bowled into Northiam, where the Six Bells proved an ideal inn for tired travellers on a Saturday night.





CHAPTER II.

IN THE HEART OF THE SOUTH DOWNS.

NORTHIAM, SUSSEX, *Sunday, 24th.* This is a thoroughly characteristic little English village. The parish church is of the rugged Norman type, like most of its kind in the southeastern counties. On the green is a giant oak, full twelve feet in diameter at the base. There is a tradition that under this sprawling forest monarch, Queen Elizabeth ate her breakfast one morning in the long ago, and for this reason it is most carefully preserved by the loyal villagers. The great rents in its trunks are filled with bricks and mortar, while a network of heavy chains prevents its monster arms from parting company.

To the east, on a gentle slope, is the rather fine "big house" of the squire, who owns the neighboring country, hill and valley, copse, field, and meadow. His well-wooded grounds, beautifully kept, sweep down to the village green. Along his boundary wall stretches the one irregular street. Here and there, prominent among the lowly cottages and shops, is a timbered house, left over from the Elizabethan age, out of whose picturesque lattices most likely idle vil-

lagers stared at the gay court of the Virgin Queen while she broke her fast yonder, just as their descendants stared at us of common clay, as we wheeled along beneath their windows last evening. It is not daily that the Six Bells has guests to sleep in its ancient four-poster.

The smock-frocks are not all gone from England. I had supposed they were, for we are constantly being told in books of travel that this cradle of our ancestors has been so modernized that the old dress and customs are no longer to be found here, and that Merry England is simply humdrum, nineteenth-century England, with the poetry all out of it, — “Americanized,” I think one of our globe-trotting compatriots has said. Possibly the tourist centres have been “Americanized,” — certainly one may say this of some of the hotels there, — but I venture to say that rural England is pretty much the same sort of country as that through which the elder Weller drove his coach, and in which Tom Brown was reared. We have frequently, in our journey, met elderly farm laborers shuffling along in their neat white smocks with open yokes, and they all look as though they had stepped out of some of Abbey’s pictures. To-day the old fellows have been numerous enough. A group of them in the rear seats at church, as they stood shyly twirling their hats in their hands, like water-wheels, when the squire and his lady entered, presented an edifying spectacle.

BATTLE, *Monday, 25th.* We had been having good weather from Canterbury to Northiam, — good weather for England; an occasional brief shower only, in which we would lay to beside an overarching

hedge and raise our umbrellas. This morning, however, black clouds poured sheets of water upon Northiam, and we were imprisoned with mine host until noon. During lunch the clouds thinned, and through jagged rents were seen great patches of ether, vividly blue. As we sallied forth, the atmosphere was soft and balmy with the odor of wild flowers. The subdued light rendered more brilliant the red of the buildings and the green of the hedges and the fields.

At first our route out of Northiam was largely uphill, over a roughly metalled road, the hedges, glistening from raindrops, often nearly meeting over the narrow, crooked, deep-sunken way. From the summit of the first hill the backward view of the village and the intervening valley was most enchanting. We are touring through dream-land.

Buttercups, vividly yellow, and kissed by the rain, thickly stud the hedge-banks. The yellow primroses, with which Surrey copse-corners were so delicately gay a week or so ago, have now nearly departed. White stitchwort gleams, star-like, in the luxuriant grass; another familiar wayside flower is a tiny blue bird's-eye; and to-day we have wild blue hyacinths in such great profusion that W——, who has a botanist's sympathy for growing blossoms, and seldom gathers such when scarce, plucked a corsage bouquet of them. Thus bedecked, we wheeled along gayly amid the sweet songs of ethereal larks, the chatter of startled thrushes, and afar off the monotonous plaint of cuckoos.

Emerging at last from these obscure by-roads upon the broader and smoother highway, we follow the crest of a ridge, — the watershed between the Rother

and one of its tributaries. On either hand are wide, far-stretching valleys, with hedge-streaked meadows, woods, and thatched cottages lowly nestled by the side of brooks. The direction to the first village, Staple Cross, as given us by two peasant women, one of them with a hoe over her shoulder, and the other pushing a fat and dirty baby in a rude perambulator, was simple: "Foller the telergraph loine." Thus instructed, we did not lose sight of the wire which stretches overland from Northiam to the post-office at Staple Cross; and it led us thither through many a maze of cross-roads, along the ridge and through the meadows.

At Staple Cross there is a small brewery, several shops, and the usual cottages of laborers. Crispe's Corner, a quarter of an hour farther on, is a rather dreary hamlet of a dozen cottages and a small public-house; but the view from Crispe's is exquisite. On the left we have the finest panorama we have yet laid eyes on in southern Britain. Forest-trees — oaks and beeches chiefly — quite fill the lower reaches of the shapely valley, whose outlet fades from view upon the horizon; on either side, the hill-slope fields, oddly shaped, are alternating splashes of chocolate brown or vivid green, according to whether freshly planted or choked with springing grain. On the brow of the overtopping hill beyond, commanding a wider range of view, we have successions of valleys, woods, and fields, with here and there the lofty spire of a parish church, and smoke rising lazily from cotters' chimneys.

At Whallington we cross the river Brede, over whose low banks the tall grass bends and quite hides

the little winding stream from sight until one is close upon it. Then we go whizzing beneath a railway arch, and after a long tug uphill with our well-loaded machines are in Battle at five P. M.

Nature is now in her prettiest garb. The morning rain freshened the foliage and washed the walls. In the warm, clear atmosphere of this afternoon, in the midst of this wealth of rural beauty, we have with keen zest enjoyed the mere sense of living in a world so abounding in heavenly places.

We have just been viewing a mellow sunset from the heights of Senlac, back of the Abbey grounds. It is easy to picture here the movements of Harold and the Conqueror. To the southeast, over the swelling hill-tops, now bare, now dark with tree-clumps, can just be distinguished the broad meadows of Pevensey Level, where William is reputed to have landed. It is plain that he moved up the narrow valley; and here, on the gentle slopes of Senlac, Harold was intrenched behind a stockade, which the Conqueror carried by assault. Where Harold was slain, William built this abbey, the crumbling ruins of which are one of the most interesting historical monuments in all England. One fully appreciates at Battle Abbey how far removed we are from the time of the Conquest.

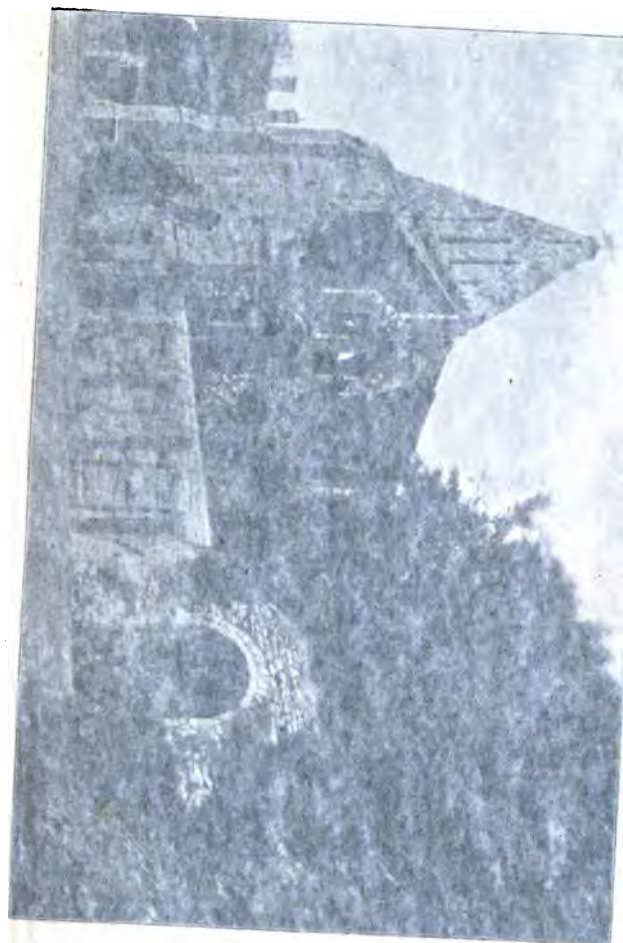
LEWES, *Tuesday, 26th.* Battle Abbey was opened to-day for the first time this season. Battle was as quiet up to ten o'clock as if the old town had gone to sleep, never to wake up again. At The George we appeared to be the only guests, but we have grown quite used to being the sole patrons of village inns: business is dull in most of them, save in the bar parlor and the tap-room, and in the great dining-hall on

market and fair days. Up and down the high street, which broadens into a market-place before the ponderous Abbey gate, could only be seen the butcher's blue-aproned boy delivering goods from a wooden tray deftly carried on his shoulder, the baker's man trundling his wheezy hand-cart, the "cow-keeper" carrying his store of cans in a wheelbarrow and ringing a bell, a poke-bonneted old woman shuffling along the footpath in heelless slippers, weighted down with a full market-basket, some ancient yokels in white smocks, and a tow-headed apprentice chasing a dog that had evidently snatched a flitch of bacon from a grocer's window.

At ten began a transformation. Small boys and white-capped women and girls appeared by the dozens, bearing all manner of printed, painted, and written signs, wooden and pasteboard, all of them nailed across the tops of pointed sticks, which were planted conspicuously in each little front garden. By eleven the whole street had blossomed out with legends in black and red and green: "Refreshments," "Lunch, with Tea," "Temperance Drinks, and Light Lunch," and "Hot Water Furnished Parties bringing their own Refreshments," — all of which looked strange enough in the midst of these quaint old parterres, backed as they are by moss-grown walls of brick and stone, and old timbered houses that had stood there these five or six hundred years, and evidently seen better days.

Soon the tourists came. There were no Americans, so far as we could see, but sturdy, more or less commonplace English folk from the neighboring towns, — largely seaside "resorters" from Hastings, seven

REINS OF BATTLE CHURCH.



road and further. Up and down the high street, which lay out of a market-place before the pond, we could only be seen the butcher's flapping apron, the covering goods from a wooden shop, the milkmaid on his shoulder, the baker's man pushing his round hand-cart, the "cow-keeper" with his milk pails in a wheelbarrow and ringing a bell, and a bonneted old woman shuffling along in heelless slippers, weighted down with a market-basket, some ancient yokels with their own, and a tow-headed apprentice chafing his hands, who had evidently snatched a flash of sun from the garden's window.

There was a transformation. Small boys and girls, young men and girls appeared by the roadside in a manner of paraded, painted, and polished, and, and polished, and polished, all of them carrying a stick of wood, which were the little front garden by eleven o'clock, and blossomed out with lilies and blue flowers and green: "Refreshments, Refreshments," "Temperance Drinks, and Light Lunches, and Foot Water Furnished Parties bringing Refreshments,"—all of which were in the midst of these quaint old patterns, and as they are by moss-grown walls of old stone, and old timbered houses, and there these five or six hundred years, and seen better days.

There were no Americans, and no one could see, but sunny, more or less comfortable, and from the neighboring towns, and from the seaside "resorter," from Hastings, seven



RUINS OF BATTLE ABBEY.



miles away. The Hastings contingent came in brakes and *char-à-bancs*. As load after load wheeled into the market-place and alighted, — the drivers resigning their teams to local ostlers, — sharp-eyed old women stood in cottage doorways, half hid amid the ivy, and watched with an anxiety painfully apparent for possible customers for their small wares.

At twelve, when the gate opened, full two hundred and fifty sight-seers had assembled, which was not bad business for the guides. The villagers had turned out in goodly numbers to see us all, waiting patiently until the last had disappeared within the portal. After the show was over, there was a scramble for lunch. Doubtless many of the amateur venders were now made happy. The great dining-hall of The George — its walls thickly hung with the framed charters of friendly societies and lodges which regularly meet and eat there — was prepared for a crush; and quite in state we partook of what the ponderous waiter, gorgeous in his holiday dress-suit, and with a fresh towel over his arm, styled a “cold collation.” Lunch it is, when served in the coffee-room on ordinary occasions, but “cold collation, zur, in the ’all, zur, Chuesdays, w’en the h’Abbey’s on, zur.”

The waiter was so kind as, in the midst of his great cares, to come out with the landlord and the ostler, to see us off, and with his towel he wafted us a stately farewell. The weather was cool and bright, as if made to order. A gentle breeze from off the sea fanned us on the quarter, but did not impede progress.

We overtook and passed brakes filled with our morning companions at the Abbey, going out to Lord Brassey’s beautiful seat, Normanhurst, three miles to

the west of Battle. They were very merry, and politely joked us as we left them to the rear. At the gate of Normanhurst — which is always open on the days the Abbey is on view — a smartly uniformed policeman stood guard, and near him crouched a group of squalid mendicants, with hands outstretched, — there is destitution enough, even in this rustic beauty-spot; the beggar everywhere haunts your footsteps in all of these foreign lands, and is forever sitting in my lord's gateway.

As we spin down into Catsfield, with its pretty model brick cottages, built for Brassey's servants, we catch fine views, over the wooded valley intervening, of the modern spires and towers of Normanhurst Castle. A ruddy-faced carter, in a white blouse, walking beside us with his team up the hill beyond, said it was twenty-four miles to Lewes (pronounced in two syllables), and that there were some "toppers" ahead of us. We found the toppers later on. They each went up for two or three miles at an angle of about thirty degrees, and at times we sighed for a steam lift.

Catsfield, Ninfield, Boreham Street, Windmill Hill, Magham Down, Horse Bridge, Dicker Common, Loughton Pound, Ringmer, — what an interesting study it would be to trace the origin of some of these names of villages we have passed through to-day, from Battle to Lewes! No doubt many a quaint romance or interesting bit of folk-lore, long since forgotten, has its monument here.

At Ninfield, with the graceful towers of Normanhurst still visible to the rear, the ocean burst upon our unfolding view. From this high vantage-point—for the

hamlet straggles along the crest of a "topper" — we have before us an inspiring scene. Great chalk downs descend to the sea in rolling ridges of greenery ; upon their summits here are often groves, and their bald sides are fantastically partitioned by hawthorn hedges, for the most part into sheep pastures, in which flocks of Southdowns nervously nibble. Beyond, a goodly strip of the Atlantic, dancing in the sunlight, leads up to the horizon ; while far to the right looms the dark, stern promontory of Beachy Head, closing in a picture which undergoes a great variety of tones beneath the changing sky.

Kent and Sussex abound in windmills of the Holland pattern. To-day we meet them chiefly on the hill-tops, their creaking arms hung with canvas sails which flap noisily in the breeze. We thought it a pretty scene, as the dusty genius of Windmill Hill, pipe in mouth, bent over the half-door of his grinding-room, gossiping with two comely women sitting on the rude steps leading up to his domain, and having an eye to a brace of children playing at their feet. These windmills, with the human groups about them, — domestic sometimes, and again carters with their loads, waiting for turns at the hopper, — are a picturesque feature in the land.

On Dicker Common, a comparatively level stretch, where for several miles there is a succession of small hamlets, we overtook an old laborer in traditional corduroy who had an intelligent aspect, and dismounted to walk with him. He seemed pleased at our interest in his affairs ; but his curiosity about us was sharp, and his shrewd questions quite as leading as those attributed to Yankees by travellers from this

side of the Atlantic who write books on American characteristics. In fact, inquisitiveness among every-day people is peculiar to no race.

He was interested, he said, "to zee a female on a machine. Ah 'ave zeen 'em, zur, as 'ad a man be-hoind, an' also, zur, a female on three w'eels, zur, boot n'er befoor did I ivver zee a female aloane on two w'eels, zur!" Growing confidential, he told W—— that he had at home a daughter just returned from America, — "w'ich Ah take it, lady, ye 're frum yerzel." On being asked from what part of America his daughter was, he seemed puzzled, evidently never having thought of it in that way before. Doffing his hat to scratch his head over this new idea, he said he "joost disremembered," but was quite sure his daughter could tell if we would but go with him to his cottage and ask her.

We were forced to decline the invitation, for the afternoon was getting on. Bidding the old fellow good-day, we mounted and were off. Crossing over the next knoll, a quarter of a mile ahead, we turned in our saddles for a backward glimpse of Dicker Common. Our wayfaring friend was still standing in the middle of the road, hat in hand, watching our disappearance.

At Horse Bridge, we cross the Cuckmere over a small brick bridge, but the stream is almost dry. At Laughton Pound, a pretty village, with a neat, enticing inn, The White Hart, we stop to debate whether or not this shall be our abiding-place. Lewes, our original destination, is six miles away; we are tired; and it is half-past six by the clock in the church tower. We decide, however, to go on.

Ringmer, a few miles on, is the sort of rustic village that we should like to spend a week in. On the broad green, boys are playing a rough game resembling hockey; and in front of the inns, villagers serenely sit on benches and gossip and quaff their beer in the peaceful twilight.

From Ringmer our way led up a broad white street, for a long distance hemmed in by the high brick walls of gentlemen's places. Then, passing over the crest of a huge chalk down, we coasted to its base, zigzagging between walls and hedges and open fields. Passing donkey carts and carriages, vine-clad cottages and stately mansions, too swiftly to do more than glance at them, we had a final grand swoop of three-quarters of a mile down into the smiling valley of the Ouse, where, dark and quaint in the gathering dusk, between two mighty downs, lay Lewes.

NEW SHOREHAM, *Wednesday, 27th.* At Lewes we were housed in one of the most delightfully cosy inns we have yet been in. The fresh-faced, buxom landlady has a jolly, whole-souled, business-like manner which is quite captivating. I had occasion to hunt her up last evening soon after our arrival. She was in the cheerful bar parlor, busied in giving directions to her maids for the coming day, at the same time waiting cheerily on two prosperous-looking farmers in leathern riding-gaiters, who had stopped in to have a friendly glass before leaving for home. The appointments of the establishment in other directions more nearly concerning us were also of the most comfortable character, and so deliciously quaint withal that we seemed to be living in the pages of Dickens and Thackeray.

Lewes (eleven thousand two hundred inhabitants) is the county town of Sussex, and although rather dingy as a whole, is well worth study for the bits and corners of antiquity to be met with here. It has too the old-time characteristics of a south of England county town that has not been spoiled by the tourists.

The fine old Norman castle, at the top of the high street, has a striking gateway and a well-preserved keep. The hoary pile is in the custody of the Sussex Archæological Society, which here maintains a creditable museum of local relics, some of the tapestries being remarkably fine. At the base of the hill and across lower town, in the midst of a sheep-meadow watered by a sluggish stream, are the picturesque, grass-covered ruins of the Priory of St. Pancras. Few arches of the structure are now standing, but there are enough remains to convey to one some idea of how beautiful must once have been this monastic monument of chalk, erected by Gundrada, the Conqueror's daughter.

As we stood contemplating the ivy-clad arches and bits of sculptured wall, vividly white, rising with their delicate tracery from piles of sod-grown débris, and seeking in fancy to reconstruct the original, a flock of sheep crowded around us in wonder. W——, in a merry mood, looked the leader sternly in the eyes. He stood rooted to the spot for a dozen seconds, then, with a frightened *ba-a-a*! dashed off through the priory arches with his score of bleating followers helter-skelter at his heels, — a pretty sight, which I should have liked to photograph, but the runaways were too quick for me.

We started for Brighton after lunch. The run is ten miles, for the most part gradually descending between the huge rolling downs, which are here bare and grass-grown, with occasional excavations for chalk, great white gashes in the greensward, conspicuous for many miles roundabout. Flocks of sheep dot the hillsides, and now and then a shepherd is seen, a lonely figure *en silhouette* against the clear blue sky. Here and there in this broad expanse of grassy ridges and sugar-loaf hills, one vast sheep pasture, — South Down mutton is famous, — is a summit crowned with a small clump of wind-warped trees, evidently a surveyor's landmark. The roadways, traversing the country in every conceivable direction, are, as everywhere in the chalk districts, a network of glaring white lines.

To-day there is a stiff breeze dead ahead from off the ocean yonder, impeding progress and filling eyes and nostrils with chalk-dust, which envelops us in great clouds. W—— finds it particularly hard navigating, for her skirts fill at each savage gust, and even on the down grades she occasionally loses her balance and is roughly dismounted.

We had, however, despite this drawback, some fine spins, and made a particularly good entry into Brighton, through broad avenues overarched with elms and crowded with fashionable equipages in considerable variety. We cared little for the great seaside resort, having already had enough of that sort of thing at Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, and Hastings, — not that these are in extent to be compared with Brighton, but they will do as samples; and our present business is with rural England.

After an hour or two of sight-seeing, we were again in the saddle and started westward over the Marine Parade. To the left was the strip of sandy beach, alive with children, nurses, donkeys, and merry-andrews, with the great gray ocean beyond, studded with sails and belching funnels; to the right, three miles of hotels and galleried villas, a thousand window-boxes brilliant with bedding plants, blue lobelias, and scarlet geraniums, and innumerable canvas awnings of striking hues.

On the broad footpaths, Bath chairs, occupied by pale invalids or obese dowagers, were being hauled up and down by burly, aldermanic-looking, silk-hatted fellows, each with his license number on a large metal tag pendent from a breast-button. Threading their way between the ceaseless procession of carriages were equestrians of both sexes, looking jaunty enough, for English men and women do know how to ride, and almost invariably have good mounts. One gay young fellow rode tandem: his mount was a solid chestnut pacer; ahead of him, guided only by a yellow silken ribbon which fluttered prettily in the breeze, a stallion, black as a sloe and with blazing eyes, pranced and reared as proudly as if he well knew he was the admiration of the parade, and that thousands of pairs of human eyes were watching him. It was quite as good as a circus performance, but altogether too much like it.

After three miles of the brilliant Brighton parade, we were quite content to come down to the quiet little fishing villages which here line the coast westward. Seven miles out, at New Shoreham, where the river Adur finds the sea through dreary salt marshes and ridges of sand, we put up for the night, for dusk was setting in.

Just in front of our rather modern inn the sprawling stream is crossed by a fine suspension bridge, the approach to which is through a ponderous arch, upon which the dyspeptic-looking stone lion of the Duke of Norfolk stands guard. The bridge, over which toll is still collected by the duke's servants, was built by some former Norfolk in the time of George IV. Midway an iron plate informs the public that either death or transportation to the colonies will be the punishment meted out to any one injuring the structure. There must have been a deal of meddling with bridges in the reign of the fourth George, for we have seen not a few notices to the same savage purport, all bearing like date.

The Early English church here at New Shoreham is said by Freeman to be "perhaps the only English parish church of the thirteenth century which affects the type of the minster and that might be a minster in scale as well as in style." After dinner we attended service there. The small congregation seemed fairly lost in the forest of great round stone pillars, and it was with difficulty we could hear the parson's words. He spoke with simplicity and with much feeling of the life and character of the saint whom this day commemorates, and bade his little flock of sailor-folk go and do likewise in the regeneration of self and the world.

CHICHESTER, *Thursday, 28th.* We started from New Shoreham at a quarter past nine this morning. Proceeding up the east bank of the Adur, we soon reached Old Shoreham, a mile away. It is a mere hamlet now, with a few cottages and a public-house; but the old Norman church dates from the time of

the Crusades, and has not yet been spoiled by "restoration." Crossing the wide salt marsh to the west by another but simpler toll-bridge, — again the duke's, — we passed the modern buildings of St. Nicholas's College, and then struck out into the country. The broad white road was as smooth as a billiard-table, though hardly as level, for we had frequently to dismount for walking.

A few miles out, the antiquated church at Lancing hamlet, and some curious old thatched cottages there, caused us to linger and photograph them. At Somp-ting, the church has an undoubted Saxon tower, the only one we have yet seen; indeed, there are few left in England. Leaving our machines in charge of the Somp-ting wagon-smith, we ascended through a charming lane to the top of an adjacent hill, and had below us a far-reaching expanse of country. It is laid out like a great park, with alternating woods and meadows, truck-gardens and cropped fields, and miles on miles of dark green hedges intersecting one another at every possible angle. The hills are often topped with windmills, which look at a distance like giants swinging Indian clubs. Down in the valleys are glittering streams, coursing slowly to the sea, and beside them little hamlets with hoary church towers. A mile or so to the south is the "resort" town of Worthing, set down on the seashore, and beyond all, the ocean, a prominent feature in the scene.

What a country this for antiquarians! Every parish church we see, near or far, bears evidence of great age. Within those ivy-clad walls, mentioned, many of them, in Domesday Book, have worshipped

followers of the Conqueror ; from their portals have gone forth many a band of devoted knights, sworn in the cause of the Crusades ; Magna Charta was proclaimed to the people from their pulpits ; they stood firm while the Wars of the Roses raged about them ; and doubtless from some of the very towers which we see before us to-day flashed beacon-lights when the invincible Armada was hovering in the Channel hard by. Through all the shock and tumult of foreign and domestic strife these houses of peace have stood,— now Catholic, now Protestant, now High Church, and now Low, but all the time consecrated to the one God, whose Word is at the basis of all enduring creeds, Christian or Pagan, however different their interpretation of it.

We proceed on our journey through many a stately avenue, bounded by the high brick and stone walls of broad estates, and the trees set within meet over our heads, affording agreeable shade. Many a pretty lane we pass, and quaint thatched cottages of lodge-keepers and laborers. We dash through numerous little villages, some of which are most bewitching in form and color, and tempt us to linger when perhaps we should be going on our way. A young bicyclist passed us like a flash to-day. His jacket and waistcoat were tied on his handle-bar, his cap was set back, his hair and necktie were flying, and his face was as red as a bit of raw beef. With distended eyes fastened upon the track ahead, and head and body bent low, he was apparently making a record, poor fellow, and had no time to waste on scenery or people.

They are very busy in the fields just now. We meet ploughmen by scores all along the way, and

must needs be cautious as we approach the mouths of lanes for fear of running afoul of strings of plough-horses coming out of them. It is customary to keep the animals at work but a few hours at a time, and there appears to be more frequent changing of teams than of men. Horseflesh is well cared for in England.

We pass men breaking flints on the roadway, with wire goggles to protect their eyes from the flying bits; shepherds resting on *gates, with dogs at side, idly watching their grazing flocks; carters in white blouses, walking beside tandem teams of heavy shire horses, and gazing at us with dull curiosity; children with books and slate slung at back, playing by the roadside, laggards from school; farm laborers, bearing bill-hooks for hedge-trimming, or hoes heavy enough to serve as adzes, shuffling along, none too eager to reach their appointed tasks. Mayhap the parson and his rosy-cheeked women folk trundle past in their modest dog-cart from a day's shopping in the county town; or the squire, fresh down on the train from London, where he was nobody, to here, where, lord of the manor, he is everybody, drives by in silent state, with a brace of liveried retainers on the box-seat.

A smudge of smoke proceeding from an unfenced copse attracted my attention just before we reached Arundel, and I went within to investigate. It was from a charcoal-burner's camp. The burner is a ragged, large-boned, gypsy sort of fellow, with a dark skin and a low brow, yet quite sociable, and with some native wit. His wife, stout and coarse-grained, sat on a keg nursing a positively filthy infant, while several other children, ranging down from ten years

old, played or worked about them, according to their ages. Their home consisted of two low, foul huts, composed of sticks stood on end, with a roof of boughs and sod, and the wall-cracks chinked with mud. Just outside were two smoking charcoal piles smothered down with dirt and ashes, and the man and his two oldest boys were splitting wood for another. It takes three days and three nights, the fellow said, to burn a pile; and every hour, night and day, it has to be watched and banked. This camp is one of fourteen maintained by a London firm which contracts for the wood with gentlemen in various parts of England and Wales. As fast as one lot is burned and carted to the nearest railway station for transport to London, the camp moves on to the next copse on its beat.

The burner himself can "read a trifle," he said; but his "'oman and children has no learnin'." This squalid camp is their home the year around, and they have never known other, neither do they mingle with the world without. Here are English people living and English children being reared amid quite as degraded surroundings, in as great filth and squalor, as I have seen in a camp of Cree Indians in Manitoba.

The picturesque little town of Arundel is the seat of the Duke of Norfolk, into whose coffers we paid largess of four cents this morning at Shoreham toll-bridge. We had hoped to visit his magnificent palace, Arundel Castle, but found that to do it we would have to wait over until to-morrow, for Mondays and Fridays are the open days. The dukes are very good-natured to open their homes to the public at all, so we did not utter maledictions. Having been

present at a few of these public openings elsewhere, and witnessed the conduct of some of the visitors, we had come to the conclusion that were we in possession of a ducal estate we should be inclined to keep the crowd out every day in the year.

At perhaps a majority of English show-places fees are charged of twelve or twenty-five cents per head, at which tourists, particularly American tourists, are apt to complain, saying it betokens a niggardly spirit on the part of my lord. The fee, however, it seems to me, is quite proper; it keeps out the worst element of the unsympathetic rabble, who could not easily be controlled, and on whom it were useless to waste time; and it goes towards the extra expense of maintaining servants especially for the work of showing the place to strangers, and the keeping in repair those portions of the grounds and buildings which the public wish especially to see, and yet which the owner might not wish to maintain merely for his own gratification.

The quaint old town, cut in twain by the graceful river Arun, is nestled closely at the foot of a precipitous eminence surmounted by the curtains and bastions of the fortress. From within these stout bulwarks the massive castle rears its crenellated walls and towers, its twelfth-century keep still intact and seeming to grin defiance to the assaults of time.

It did not take long to exhaust, in the tourist acceptance of the term, the other lions of Arundel,—the parish church of 1380, and the modern Roman Catholic church, which the present devout duke has built at a cost of half a million dollars; but Arundel is such a delightfully fascinating place, and the Arun's

canoeing possibilities so apparent, that we were sorely tempted to stay over, and yet for various reasons did not. Surely we must go again to Arundel.

Unable to see the castle to-day, we added several miles to our journey by wheeling through the duke's park. The lodge-keeper's daughter, a short-skirted, pink-faced rustic beauty, opened for us the great gate, and interestedly gave directions as to the best route through the labyrinth of drives. Her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she courtesied in acknowledgment of our modest tip, and her thoughts were doubtless of the bright ribbon she could now buy for her wealth of flaxen hair.

Arundel is one of the most delightful parks in all England. Such vistas of forest and meadow, hill and vale! In scenes such as this, the English masters of the palette have found inspiration. They can be pictured with the brush, but not with the pen; here words are too weak. One reads a great deal, particularly in American journals, about the hardship resulting from the English nobility turning so much of the country into great parks that yield nothing, and there are people who would like to see this noble old island cut up into small holdings. For my part, I cannot sympathize with such utilitarian aspirations. These are beauty-spots, heavenly places, rescued from the humdrum world. Here the English sense of the beautiful is developed, the heart cultivated, the soul trained. England would no longer be Old England if the great estates were divided among peasant proprietors; it is a condition of affairs said to be coming, but I am pleased to believe that it will not be in my day.

A baronial park is almost as much the public's as

the baron's; the former use it quite as frequently as the latter, and doubtless find the greater pleasure in doing so, because without expense or responsibility. In the maintenance of an estate like Arundel, a large number of servants are employed, — stewards, landscape-gardeners, road-makers, foresters, game-keepers, herdsmen, ostlers, coachmen, and miscellaneous laborers. It is a question whether there are not almost as many individuals thus employed as could find occupation upon the same territory in the capacity of peasant proprietors, and very likely at better remuneration with less toil. I do not have at hand any statistics to bear me out, but I am inclined to believe that such is the case. Now, if some professional economist should chance to read my cycling journal, I imagine he will sniff at this, and compare such argument to the familiar doctrine of the utility of the charity ball as an industrial factor, which is the man-of-straw daily knocked down in college class-rooms. Granted, that whereas all these people are thus profitably employed, the land remains comparatively unproductive; yet so long as hundreds of good English farms are lying waste in the present agricultural depression, vainly begging for tenants, and so long as these beauty-spots are popular educators and help to make England attractive to foreign tourists who pour out their money here, I am sure the majority of Englishmen are justified in looking, as they do, with complacency on the great estates of the nobles. I myself, as becomes a native American, have little reverence for monarchs or nobles, but I do enjoy their demesnes, and count them useful as conservators of historical monuments.

To the north, Arundel Park culminates in a hill, rising probably four hundred feet above the fertile plain which from its base stretches farther northward for many a mile. The Arun, glistening like molten silver down there in the bright sunshine, winds and twists through the scene, now and then hidden by a patch of woodland in the foreground. Row-boats upon its surface look like walking-stick bugs, and cattle grazing on the brink are but dark blotches. Turning to the southwest, we are in the road styled Fair Mile Bottom, — a rocky zigzag of two and a half miles, leading down to the Chichester highway. On our way we bowl past herds of the duke's fallow deer, clumps of shaggy Scotch cattle, a group of humped cattle from India, and sheep that doubtless have won for their noble master many a prize in this land of mutton, — all peacefully grazing in sunny glades under the charge of herdsmen.

The sun now hung low over the western downs, and a cooling sea-breeze set in to help us along the smooth white road. The sense of moving so swiftly and with so slight an effort was something akin to what perhaps we may yet live to experience in flying-machines.

Two and a half miles from Chichester, the little village of Boxgrove, a half-mile off the main road, looked especially inviting, even for this enchanted land, as in the soft twilight it loomed up across the level fields to the right, with its timbered houses, thatched roofs, and graceful spire. Thus tempted, we turned aside to visit this ideal hamlet, approaching it through an elm-arched lane that might well have been the avenue to a palace.

Midway we met a tall, mild-mannered man in mid-

dle life, with a white smock and a shepherd's crook, followed by a collie. Behind them came a hundred sheep, freshly shorn, now stopping for a last nibble on the juicy hedge-banks, now scampering forward like children fearful of being left behind. Shepherd stopped to chat a moment with us, the collie sedately showing his teeth at such of his wards as ventured too closely to press upon their guardian's heels. It was a pretty sight, after we had passed on and turned for a final look, to see the flock eagerly dash forward to a wayside pond, and in company with the collie slake their thirst, the gentle shepherd contemplatively leaning against the trunk of an overspreading elm.

We tarried so long to talk with the rustics, and to admire Boxgrove's Early English priory church, — its vaulting is finely painted and decorated, — that it was well for us the twilight is now so protracted. To make up for lost time, we bowled right swiftly on from Boxgrove, past several pretty wayside inns and a number of well-appointed estates, till the rugged outlines of Chichester's time-worn cathedral stood sharply against the rosy-tinted sky, with broad meadows intervening. The rippling water of the river Lavant, which the highway follows into town, was strewn with green leaves and boughs of may, as though some one higher up the stream was hedge-clipping after hours. The streets of quiet little antiquated Chichester were almost deserted as we rode along in the gloaming, now and then a butcher's lad making his last delivery, or a group of cotters' families gossiping by the narrow footpath, or the lamp-lighter going his rounds.



CHAPTER III.

CHICHESTER, GOODWOOD, AND MIDHURST.

MIDHURST, SUSSEX, *Friday, 29th.* There appears no need of setting down in my journal any particulars of what we did at Chichester this morning. We can read all about it in the numerous guide-books when we get home, if our memories need refreshing; yet it seems now as though here were imprinted brain-pictures which can never be effaced; here were impressions gained which will never grow dim. From the summit of the detached bell-tower we had the most comprehensive view. The city (eight thousand inhabitants) is a jumble of red-tiled roofs, with the old gray Norman cathedral towering far above them. All around, beyond the ancient city walls, still for the most part intact, flat green fields stretch away for many miles; and through them we see the Lavant, merely a meadow-creek, winding its lazy way.

From Lewes to Chichester we had been proceeding westward, following the coast by highways from two to a half-dozen miles inland. Our path to Alton (Hants), by the way of Midhurst and Petersfield, was henceforth to be north and west.

Early this afternoon we retraced for a mile the broad white Arundel road along the Lavant, and then turning to the left wheeled northward through shady lanes and on by-roads to Goodwood House, the superb seat of the Duke of Richmond. Learning at the lodge that the ducal family were away, we made arrangements to visit the mansion, only open to the public in their absence, which fortunately is frequent. The housekeeper was at lunch, however, and we were obliged to await her pleasure.

In front of the stables, which in exterior design might well have done duty for a gentleman's country house, a knot of jolly young ostlers were making merry over the frantic efforts of one of their fellows to learn to ride a safety bicycle. Actuated either by native politeness, or a desire for a tip, perhaps by both motives, one of the men came forward, and touching his cap, begged that we would allow him to care for our machines within, while we were inspecting the mansion and its grounds. Thus unencumbered, we passed a pleasant hour beneath the beeches and in the garden. Men were carefully rolling the great level lawn in front of the house, some dozen acres in extent, in preparation for a neighborhood cricket match to be held there to-morrow. Through the beech grove scampered a flock of bleating sheep, racing for a pond, their shepherd and his dog not far behind. Here and there groups of fancy cattle, guarded by keepers, made pretty pictures; a Scotch bull, with shaggy hair almost sweeping the ground, stood on a rocky hillock just without a copse, nervously sniffing the air, a worthy subject for Landseer.

In due time we ascended the broad steps to Good-

wood House, which has a certain resemblance to our own White House, and on ringing the bell were soon face to face with the housekeeper, — a fine-looking woman of the upper serving class, in a black gown and a neat white cap. The furniture and decorations are of that rich and substantial character we are apt mentally to associate with baronial halls, their dignity perhaps enhanced by the housekeeper's subdued, deferential tone, as she acts well her part of showman.

The walls of the long line of stately apartments are thickly hung with family portraits of the Richmonds and the Portsmouths, in whose company also appear the more or less idealized lineaments of their several Stuart and Hanoverian sovereigns. The collection embraces some of the masterpieces of Van Dyck, Titian, Reynolds, Lely, Gainsborough, Kneller, Rubens, and Lawrence. So many of the faces had, in black-and-white reproductions, been familiar to us from childhood that it seemed as if we were suddenly waking up historic dead, suddenly to come upon them at every turn, looking at us like breathing humans from out their gilded windows.

In glass cases too are relics of this storied throng. Here, a ring and a handkerchief worn to the scaffold by him whom the housekeeper, who knows her place, styles "the murdered Charles;" there, a fan of this princess, the shoe-buckles of this sovereign, the jewelled sword of another; in one casket, the autograph letter of a king to his dear friend, a Portsmouth; in another, a golden snuff-box given by some monarch who had tired of it to his faithful Richmond. Mere baubles these, for republicans to smile at, yet somehow they speak to us most eloquently of the past, and make English history more real.

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The Goodwood races, each July, are world-famous. Five or six weeks later, and Goodwood House, now as solemn as a historical museum, will be a scene of gaiety. The Prince of Wales and his suite will be here for a week, with a jovial company of noble sportsmen. The park will be overrun with tens of thousands of the British public, afoot, on horseback, and in drags. Fortunes, plebeian and princely, will change hands daily. Dukes and tailors, bishops and gamblers, society queens and painted wantons, will for the nonce jostle one another in this hurly-burly, and the air will quiver with British shouts, democratically mingled.

The race-course is in a natural amphitheatre at the summit of a hill some two miles north of the mansion. We had to push our machines up several steep grades before we reached it, but the retrospective views of the emerald plain of Chichester and the rolling Goodwood forest, as they unfolded, quite repaid us. The scene to the south and west from the grand stand was most superb, the country lying at our feet like a map of varied hues.

This being my first English race-course, — though W—— had “done” the Goodwood races on a previous visit years ago, — it surprised me to find it literally green, springy sod. Used as I was to our bare tracks at home, I had never stopped to consider that the term “turf” as applied to American courses is an imported misnomer. In England, it seems, it is really “the turf.” The verdant Goodwood track could only be traced from the grand stand by the occasional white quarter-posts straggling away over the gentle rises, the carpet of deep green unrelieved

save by ragged brown patches of gorse, hawthorn, and heather.

I am not a horse man, but it seems to me that the Goodwood races, amid such noble natural surroundings, and in the presence of so heterogeneous a British throng as will soon be blackening these hillsides, must be quite inspiring, if one could but forget the gambling and the general demoralization, and look upon it all as merely a picturesque experience.

We were so interested in the race-course that a sharp thunder-clap first warned us of an approaching storm from off the sea. A wall of rain came sweeping towards us, first obscuring the southernmost down, next Chichester plain and the cathedral, then the edges of Goodwood Park, later the wooded ravines below, and finally enveloping us, for the first time fully testing our mackintoshes, which we had hastily donned.

The downpour was soon over, English fashion, and we were again in the saddle, descending a steep, rough hill-road to the duke's village of Charlton. An ostler in his shirt-sleeves, cleaning a harness in front of a small brick stable, informed me with undisguised pride that in the villages of Charlton, East Dean, and Singleton — all three within sight of one another across the fields — the entire population were "the duke's servants, sir."

If these people are proud of the duke, the duke in turn has reason to be proud of his villages. Charming hamlets they are, with high street walls of dressed flints, beautiful partition hedges neatly trimmed, rows of box in the gay parterres, and vines clambering over the cottage walls. The roofs are artistically

thatched, their prevailing brown and yellow tints variegated with moss and lichens, "hen and chickens," and clumps of curious little weeds bearing buff and scarlet blossoms. Some of the heavily timbered cottages in Charlton are evidently relics of the days of Queen Bess, and have known as masters a long line of ducal Richmonds.

Crossing the pretty little stone bridge which spans the Lavant, here a meagre brook, we flash by the vicar, — tall, slender, broad-hatted, and clean-shaven, walking dreamily with his hands clasped behind his back. He pauses and looks at us with startled sadness, as it seems, for this rude intrusion of nineteenth-century progress upon eighteenth-century meditations.

Up and down we go, over the easy grades of a well-made road. Now and then the rain comes without warning, and we suddenly unstrap our water-proofs; but it is as quickly gone, and the sky for a time smiles so serenely that we are persuaded to imagine it will remain clear, English weather is so fickle.

We flit through the cottage-lined street of quiet little Corking, between Westdean Wood and Heyshot Downs. At Dunsford hamlet we have a wide view of the valley of the Rother, — an affluent of the Arun, and not the Rother crossed in passing from Kent into Sussex. Soon, as we spin along, the roofs and church tower of old Midhurst town peer above the trees carpeting a small hill beyond the river; and then, on reaching the brow of the ridge which our highway has till now followed, we have the green valley temptingly spread out below us, flecked with the shadows of passing clouds.

Coasting under an overhanging bank, rich in mosses, vines, and wild-flowers, and corded with the projecting roots of trees, we passed groups of laborers — men, women, and children — descending from the upper fields to their valley homes. Each bore a luncheon-basket, and tools of rural toil, — forks, hoes, bills, and rakes. They seemed a merry company, chattering on the way, but we noticed how silent they grew as we approached, gently tinkling our bells as the law demands. There was evident an abundance of curiosity, but the demeanor of these people was quiet and respectful, with no apparent staring.

“Warm welcome” met us at our inn, under whose arch we passed just as the sun was setting in the ruddy west. Since dinner we have been wandering about the town, which seems under the influence of a spell in these soft twilight hours. Tourists occasionally come here for an hour or so to view the ruins of Cowdray House, — a sixteenth-century mansion of splendid proportions, burned in 1793; but Midhurst has much to interest the intelligent traveller besides Cowdray ruins, picturesque though they be.

There are scores of quaint timbered houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their projecting upper stories long ago warped out of plumb, nodding familiarly to each other over the narrow ways. The free grammar school, a pleasant, vine-covered old house on the high street, was founded in 1672 “for twelve boys to be instructed in Latin and Greek, and in writing and arithmetic, if they be capable to learne.” The little parish church, with its pile

of monuments of the Montague family, — lords of the manor from before the days when New England was first heard of, — is in the centre of the town, and looks well worthy of an hour's attention to-morrow morning.

The parish registers here come down to us in an unbroken line from 1565. We think this going back quite far enough; really the records are comparatively modern, for Midhurst, then in the midst of the Andredsweald, was deemed something of a town in Roman days, and at the time of the Norman Conquest was "a considerable place." Although now numbering seventy-five hundred inhabitants, it is probably of less relative importance to-day than then. Quite early in the present century the place acquired some notoriety as a rotten borough, sending up two members from a population of little over one thousand; and it was once said in a reform speech that "at Midhurst the very stones appeared as voters for members of Parliament."

Our steps led us in course of time down to the river-side, where the stream is stoutly dammed to furnish power for a whiting-mill. Along the top of the dam runs a quaint old bridge. At its base is a timbered cottage, put together with wooden pins, and stuccoed upon exterior lath-work, as is the fashion with these ancient houses. Wrinkled and warped into wavy lines, clearly it is one of the oldest, if one of the most modest, dwellings in all Midhurst. A comely young woman, a laborer's wife, stood at the wicket, and by her, two children played at hide-and-seek in and out the little garden. In the advanced twilight the mill-pond had a purplish

hue as it reflected the fading color of the clouds ; and downstream, the deep-cut rustic gorge, overhung with beeches and yews, was suggestive of mystery.

We stopped to gossip with the young mother, who was evidently pleased to have us do so. W——, thinking of her own dear one, left for the summer far across seas, caressed the curly-headed boy, and asked his age. "Oh, m-am ! he be a jubilee boy, 'e be, — born two days 'efore her blessit Majesty's jubilee !"¹ This is the first "jubilee boy" we have met, but we hear at the inn that all over England they are considered lucky youngsters, with a chance of being remembered in the queen's will. As there was quite as large a crop of British infants in 1887 as in any other year of her Majesty's long reign, it will take a rare fortune to go round if these hopes are to be realized.

On being asked how old her cottage was, the woman said, "Oh, it 's wery old, — one o' the holdest in Midhurst ; my 'usban's mother she were born in't, and she be seventy-eyte !" This was doubtless intended to quite crush us with a sense of antiquity. In view of the fact that the house bore evidences of being at least three hundred years old, we but found in her assertion another example of the lack of historical conception on the part of her class. Frequently have we made similar inquiries along our way, and invariably had from the cottagers replies akin to this. Their notion of antiquity goes no farther back than their grandfather's memory. In this they remind me of a young New Orleans Creole, a cotton-factor's clerk, who was once piloting a few of us

¹ In 1887. The boy was four years old.

around the French quarter of his native city. Solemnly pausing before the oldest historical monuments it could boast of, and striking an attitude, he would grandiloquently exclaim, "Zhentlemens, deese iz one of ze ol'est build'n in N'Orleans ! Eet was 'ere befo' I was born !"

Directed by our cottage friend, we passed through her garden and down some steps at the foot of the dam to a plank walk over the dwindled Rother, — the name of which stream, by the way, the woman did not know, although living almost over it. Through the centre is a long broad walk, lined by lofty yews, whose branches meet far overhead. In the gloaming, — a faint yellow light sifting in from the western sky, through the double rows of branchless trunks, — the effect was cathedral-like and indescribably impressive. Local tradition says that this was where Queen Anne loved to walk when visiting the Montagues of old ; and a moist hollow hard by, now nearly choked with weeds, is assigned as the site of a spring by whose side Anne often chose to have her luncheon served. I know not how true are these sayings of the village folk, but such things might well have been. As we emerged from the wood and sought Cowdray ruins before the prolonged twilight had wholly gone, we preferred not to be sceptics, but to count Anne a woman of goodly taste.

Pressing on across a meadow, to where the Rother plainly once did duty as a moat, we stood in front of the massive gray walls of what was once one of the finest mansions in England. In an old history of Sussex, lying open before me, there is a plate showing that about 1812 the roofless structure was well-

nigh perfect, with crenellations complete, and the windows of the great halls fully mullioned. Time has wrought great changes in eighty years. There are now many broad gaps and ragged outlines, heavily draped with ivy, while some portions are railed off and labelled "Dangerous." Cowdray ruins are certainly more picturesque now than they were two generations ago. They are weird enough to-night, out there in the fog-wrapped meadow, to build a romance on. Never before, I think, have I sighed for the art of the novelist.

ALTON, HANTS, *Saturday, 30th.* We were down early at the Cowdray ruins, in Midhurst, this morning; that is, early for England. In America, where the days would be thirty hours long if business men had a chance to revise the calendar, all but our largest towns are in full swing by eight o'clock, and even before. Here in England, in London or out, the shop apprentices begin at nine to take down the shutters and sweep, while the proprietor puts in an appearance at ten or after. At five in the evening, four hours before our shop-keepers in the "provinces" are content to lock their doors, the English business day is over. Add to this a half-holiday each week, during which every shop in town is literally closed, and a "short afternoon" on Saturday, and you have a situation of affairs which an American salesman would be inclined at first sight to style "a perpetual picnic."

When we walked down the high street, just as the clock in the church tower was striking nine, the shutters were being removed from the shop windows, and it looked as though the town were just opening its eyes.

The fog was lifting off the rich, verdant meadows surrounding Cowdray ruins, and the grassy paths were sopping wet. The cicerone is a motherly old woman in black, domiciled in a row of laborers' cottages hard by the massive gate. Her grandmother, she said, was in service there ninety-eight years ago, when the mansion was burned. She seemed proud that thus long had her family been keeping touch with the nobility. The walls are tottering in places; two years ago a huge chimney collapsed, making a sad break, but since then no stones have fallen. We were shown, among other features, a tower room which had lodged Queen Elizabeth. There was a good deal of magnificence in the courts, banqueting-halls, and chapels of these grand old houses of the early time, but the bed-chambers always strike us as small, dark, and dreary, and often there were no means of heating them. V-shaped slits in the thick walls served as windows, and altogether they too closely resembled dungeon cells to suit our present tastes. The overhanging, sunny, lattice-windowed bedrooms of the timbered dwellings of the middle class were certainly more cheerful than these lonesome caves in which crowned heads and nobles were immured for safe keeping over night.

There is much that is romantic in the history of Cowdray House. Built by the Earl of Southampton in the reign of Henry VIII., it later passed into the hands of his celebrated half-brother, Sir Anthony Browne, grand standard-bearer of England, and descended to Browne's son, the first Viscount Montague, who greatly enlarged and embellished it. In its decoration Holbein participated, also Pellegrini;

among the canvases were two Raphaels, and many from other masters, while some of the mural paintings were famous. These last were hidden from the iconoclasts of the Commonwealth by a coat of plaster hastily applied.

Twice has Cowdray been visited by royalty, — once by Edward VI., in 1547, when Sir Anthony was the host ; and again by Queen Elizabeth, who was Montague's guest in 1591. A private letter by Edward has come down to us, in which he writes of "a goodly house of Sir A. Browne's, where we were marvelously, yea, rather excessively, banketted." Queen Bess, says a contemporaneous account, was "most royallie feasted" by Lord Montague ; "the proportion of breakfast was three oxen and one hundred and fifty geese," doubtless a more elaborate repast than that of which she partook under the great elm which we saw the other day in Northiam. There was a masque, too, for the virgin queen's entertainment at Cowdray, and many other gay doings, the reading of which sounds strange enough in our matter-of-fact age. We are told that, so pleased was the royal personage at this expensive foolery, "on going through the arbour to take horse for Chichester, her Majesty knighted six gentlemen." A queen can perform this miracle of transmuting common blood into noble, and thus delighting generations yet unborn, as easily as she brushes a fly from her palfrey's neck.

I was pained on examining the local chronicles to find no trace of a visit to Cowdray from Queen Anne. How to reconcile this with Anne's Walk and Anne's Spring, which we visited last evening, I know not. Had she been here the fact would, I am sure, not have

been overlooked by the parish historians ; and so we are forced to the conclusion that some less notable Anne must of old have haunted the yew-tree path, and had her picnics by the woodland pool. It is, however, a pity to spoil a pleasing tradition.

In 1793, with the greater part of its artistic treasures, noble Cowdray was accidentally destroyed by fire. A few days later (the cicerone, more romantic than accurate, says on the same day) the owner — the last Viscount Montague — was drowned in attempting to shoot the falls of the Rhine. As he was unmarried, the property descended to a sister, whose heirs, bearing another name, are still in possession. Their small but beautiful modern house, Cowdray Lodge, is just visible a mile distant through the trees.

The cavernous old kitchen, with its four monster fireplaces, in each of which an ox could have been, and doubtless at times was, roasted whole, is at present a mere lumber-room, its sole occupants being the guide's two Persian cats, ignobly tied to their kennels. The old woman met our protest at such treatment of her silken pets by saying it was her only means of keeping them at home ; if freed, they would wander beyond the quadrangle of the ruins, and be shot by the game-keepers as poachers. A cat too fond of pheasants' eggs is in England the special object of a game-keeper's detestation.

Crossing what remains of the ancient moat, and taking a broad path, which is the descendant of what was once a noble approach to the gate of Cowdray, we again sought the town and the remaining lions. The church is not of great merit, but the tombs of the Brownes and the Montagues, considerably injured by

Cromwell's men, are interesting historical relics. The old gabled houses that one may meet on every hand, had lost none of their charm for us, now that the glare of day had succeeded the dreamy twilight in which they were at first invested.

One particularly interesting antique is known as "Bacon House." It is tucked away in a crooked corner, — for Midhurst is not laid out on the checker-board plan, — and we found it necessary more than once to inquire the way. At the smartest-looking grocery in the high street, where we bought materials for a wayside lunch, no one knew of Bacon House. A salesman in a long white apron accompanied us to the door, and pointing vaguely to the mouth of a neighboring alley, said, "They's a lot o' hold rattle-trap properties areound there, zur, and likely as not the thing yer be a-lookin' for may be in the nyberhood, zur." Bacon House was there, sure enough, not a stone's throw away, just as represented in the popular photographs and paintings of Midhurst, and yet this shopful of grocerymen had never heard of it! However, we come across so many examples of this sort of thing over here that we are getting quite used to it. In a town full of "hold rattle-trap properties," as is Midhurst, perhaps the good people may be excused from having an intimate acquaintance with each individual specimen of the class.

We were loath to leave Midhurst. It is the quaintest town we have yet been in. I fear we may seek long before finding its equal. It would have been a delightful experience to spend a week in this ideal spot, breathing its historic atmosphere, and gathering inspiration from these survivals of the past.

Hawthorne has somewhere said that it would take six human lifetimes thoroughly to "do" England, and we are now prepared to agree with him. Our present tour would be called "leisurely" by those who exhaust England in a fortnight, and yet our ever-present thought is that we are exhibiting unseemly haste. Seeing the people and the country at close range, as we do on our machines, temptations to linger and see more daily beset us. We are often seized with a desire to turn aside from our prescribed path, and visit scenes the fame of whose surpassing beauty or historical association reaches us on our way; but should we yield to these allurements we might spend the summer in a single county, for each seems packed with interesting objects. We can only flit like the bee, sipping sample sweets here and there. Sometime we may come back to dream in Midhurst, but this noon we must be on the wing.

Tramping up the steep grade which leads out of Midhurst to the west, we had for company, just ahead of us, two Italians hauling a wheeled street-organ swathed in green cloth. A diminutive monkey in cap and skirt was perched atop, shrilly chattering at a group of boys who mischievously poked sticks at the African stranger. At the hill-top, we mounted our wheels for a coast down the other side, leaving the rest of the procession to follow as best it might.

Our path is rolling to-day, and we have frequently to walk. This is no hardship, for the valley views are soft and pretty, and we are glad to examine them at leisure. Peaceful hamlets repose at the feet of the hills, which latter are often well-covered with thorny

furze, now black from recent ground fires. A week or two hence these blackened stalks will be brilliant with yellow blossoms, rising from a dense carpet of purple heather.

It is rather a barren stretch along the hill-road, from Stedham well-nigh to Petersfield. There is an absence of hedges and cultivated fields up here; squatters' hovels, with stacks of furze about them for fuel, are just frequent enough to emphasize the desolation; ragged children crowd to windows and rickety gates to see us; pigs gruntle as we pass near their wallowing spots; geese go hissing before us in the dust. This rustic squalor on the scorched and sandy hill-tops is in sharp contrast to the condition of affairs in the green, fair valleys below, and we are glad to be speeding on our way.

We pass through Trotton, Turwick, Rogate, and Sheet, all of them mere clusters of cottages, each with its public-house, and in a cabin window here and there a small display of groceries and sweets to tempt the passer-by. At Rogate is a smith's shop, picturesquely set back from the road in the deep shade of some giant oaks. On the grass in front lie a score of prostrate tree-trunks stripped of their bark, and evidently well seasoned from years of exposure to the elements. This is the artisan's timber-yard. He slices off his own boards, as wanted, in the old-time saw-pit beside the shop, and like most of his fellow-craftsmen in the rural districts, cares little for quotations from the timber exchange. It is something of an advantage, this being able to select the tree from which you would have your wagon or your chest of drawers constructed by this independent

workman. As these country smiths conduct their shops, so were conducted their grandfathers' establishments. What is the need of changing that which was well enough of old? Only the Americans wish the latest gimcracks that are going, and turn up their noses at their fathers' doings.

There were broad views of tree-crowned ridges and green meadows as we crossed the border into Hampshire, and bowled down by easy stages into Petersfield. We saw but little of the town, for there is nothing more antiquated here than a big grammar school. At Langrish, a hamlet a few miles to the west on the Winchester road, we visited a large farmhouse, and spent some hours most happily with friends. How genuine is English hospitality! There is nothing like it in America, save the greeting one finds at the home of old-school country gentlemen in our Southern States; and I fear even that may not last long, for we have a New South now, with Northern capital, native industries, and all that sort of thing, — very profitable, no doubt, but the local color is fading out in this blaze of materialistic sunshine.

It is not a long run from Langrish to Alton, — only twelve miles, and over as fine roads as the sun ever shone upon. There is one hill to climb, and that in the beautiful park of Basing House, through which at the start we took a short cut, entering by "Langrish Gate" and emerging at "Alton Gate."

East Tisted is one of the loveliest of Hampshire villages. To the left, stretching up a hill-slope, and fenced only by a few strands of wire, — a welcome

relief from the customary high walls,—is the ideal park of Rotherfield House. In the glades were groups of fancy cattle, the beautiful mansion of the squire peering over the trees beyond. The village opposite lies stretched along the smooth white road, a charming study of gracefully outlined roofs of yellow thatch, above which, in sharp contrast, rises the cold gray tower of the inevitable parish church.

Camped by the wayside here, were a family of gypsies. Their gaudily painted van was hung with baskets, which they are hawking through the country. A span of gaunt horses grazed along the bank near by; and the Rommany folk, big and little, were perched on the empty shafts eating an early supper composed largely of tinned comestibles. The mother was young, though with a plentiful progeny, and freely talked with W—— about her domestic affairs. She had rather pretty features, with a skin as dark as a quadroon squaw's, and gratified the taste of her race for cheap and gaudy ornaments. The wagon was her home, she said, and she had never known other; she felt sure she should suffocate if compelled to live in any of those cooped-up cottages over the way. Their life was free, without taxes, rents, or compulsory school-laws, and if they grew tired of one shire they could move to another, as indeed they were constantly doing. Peddling was their chief employ. In winter, they were tinkers, and made tin pails and pans for their itinerant trade; in summer, they bought baskets to sell again at a profit, and sometimes made clothes-pins if in a wooded region. The Rommany beauty spoke proudly of this

life, which she deemed ideal, and no doubt thought that, as gypsying cyclists, we were envious of her career in a two-horse van.

Just out of East Tisted we selected a green bank under a clump of fine elms as our lunching spot, and called at the door of a small neighboring farmhouse for milk. A young man of the better order of working folk responded to our rap. He said he was alone in the house, and insisted that we bring our lunch into the parlor. W——'s housewifely protests were of no avail, so we were soon established at the centre-table in this modest room. Our host deftly spread a copy of the "London Standard" as a crumb-cloth, and having brought a jug of milk and two glasses, gracefully bowed himself out, leaving an invitation to stay as long as we liked, and rest. Through the window I noticed him, with pipe and newspaper, seated under a tree on the farther side of the little garden. It was admirably done, this bit of hospitality. We had had, however, some experience over here in being inveigled into the acceptance of service we did not need, and cannot be blamed, as we leisurely chatted over our suddenly glorified lunch, for dubbing this an ingenious method of extracting a shilling where twopence would otherwise have been sufficient. To our great surprise the young man seemed offended at the offer of coin, and was rather haughty until we apologized, when he turned it off as an amusing incident, and at the gate merrily bade us farewell. He is the first person of his class we have met in this land of tips to decline pay for services rendered. We learned later that he was a prosperous farrier.

The villages of Farrington and Chawton are not far beyond. On a road as smooth and firm as a floor we swiftly shot through them as the sun was setting, and soon were at Alton, where for a time we are to be domiciled with friends.





CHAPTER IV.

WITH HAMPSHIRE FOLK.

ALTON, HANTS, *Sunday, May 31.* We were with our friends to-day at the old parish church. Like hundreds of its kind in England, it was bombarded by Cromwell's soldiers; and a brass tablet records the bravery of a certain Loyalist chief who stoutly defended himself within these walls, until finally killed in the south porch. They show you in the door of the porch dints made by Commonwealth bullets, and there are yet visible about the venerable building other scars of the conflict. It is astonishing how many sins are laid against Cromwell by custodians of the property of the Establishment. A nose off a statue, a shattered mullion, a broken altar, the destruction of mural paintings by whitewash or plaster, an absence of brasses from hollows where once they lay, or any conceivable disfigurement invariably is ascribed to the direct orders of the Protector. The Cromwellians must have been exceedingly busy despoilers during the short period of their supremacy if they did all that is charged to them.

In English churchyards one is sharply reminded of how fleeting a thing is human life and reputation. These have been the burying-grounds of the community for centuries, or were until a few years ago, when the government stepped in to forbid additional interments in grounds already filled. One generation was laid away on top of the preceding, which accounts for the yard often being considerably elevated above the adjoining land. You know that you are walking over layer after layer of human dust, and can coldly calculate how many feet deep of corpses there are. At first the lack of veneration over here in the Old World for the bones of preceding generations of men shocks Americans, whose graveyards are as a rule of such recent origin that they have not yet forgotten the personality of the beings first buried there. In scores of rural cemeteries that I have examined in England, a slab standing in place with a date earlier than 1750 is rare, and this under the shadow of a Gothic church tower. The climate is partly to blame, but more than all is the indifference of survivors. Monumental slabs not over a century and a quarter old are freely used to mend the churchyard wall, or to serve as pavements for foot-paths. These frail memorials of the low-born dead lose their significance when the third generation comes on the scene. The recumbent marble effigies of the knights and ladies of the shire, which one often finds flanking the inner walls of the sanctuary, are more lasting ; but even they are mere curiosities now, and are, in many churches we have seen, rudely scribbled and scratched over with the names of several generations of tourists and village children.

Alton is a characteristic Hampshire town of some five thousand inhabitants, — a centre of rural trade, with a railway station, large breweries, and some small manufacturing industries. The river Wey courses through the place. It is a mere creek from an American standpoint, but along its banks are some of the most beautiful rustic scenes we have met with, — woods and meadows, picturesque bridges and charming old mills, cattle and sheep peacefully grazing, clumps of graceful willows, and white daisies thickly studding the fields.

MONDAY, *June 1.* After lunch to-day we drove in a wagonette for some thirty miles, with our host and his family. Great hedges line much of the way. Beyond them lie green meadows, spangled with yellow buttercups. Men are in the fields ploughing, and planting potatoes. In the hop-gardens, women and children are tying the vines. We are shown hop plants that are at least a hundred years old. Our host is the proud possessor of one garden which we pass, mentioned in his grandfather's diary in 1798. Alton and Farnham hops are famous. It is, too, something of a horse-breeding district, and from our road along the ridge we notice that frequently the pastures down below are dotted with mares and their foal. The Wey is glistening in the sunlight as, now overhung with willows and now great elms, it curves gently through the narrow valley. High on the upland beyond are cottages and wide-spreading farmsteads, and here and there such "hangers" — woodlands on steep hillsides — as Gilbert White described when rector at neighboring Selborne.

We have been through Anstey, Holybourne, and

Binsted, and now approach Alice Holt Wood, a surviving fragment of the Andredsweald. Our host has free entry over a private road. A half-mile within the gate is as dreamy a little pond set in the forest as any we have laid eyes upon. On the farther side, making a pretty picture with its sharp reflection in the pool, is the game-keeper's cottage. The keeper, a stout fellow in gray corduroy, comes forward with a brace of retrievers playfully leaping about him, apparently to challenge our entry, but upon recognizing the trap, turns and pretends to be busied with a coop of pheasant chicks, half hid in the tall grass.

Alice Holt is a royal forest, and its twenty-seven hundred acres are carefully guarded by Her Majesty's rangers. In a pretty lodge lives the keeper's master, a gentleman who for a goodly rental hires the shooting in this belt of timber. Considerable cutting is being done here just now, on scientific principles of preservation, for forestry is an art in England. Wherever needed, new trees are planted each season, and none are felled save such as interfere with the growth of neighbors, have become seriously maimed in storms, or exhibit signs of decay. This is a bit of the primeval forest only in the sense of there having been trees here from the earliest historic times; yet it is doubtful if there are many trees in the wood that have not been planted where they stand, or are over fifty years old.

When an English forest-tree is felled, it is sawn off level with the ground, and at once stripped of its green bark, out to the tips of branches as small as one's thumb. The bark is carefully gathered into

wagons for transport to the tanneries; the naked white trunk, bereft of its largest branches, is hung with chains from the axles of monster wheels, and eventually stands on end in some town timber-yard, or lies on the green fronting such a smith's shop as we saw the other day at Rogate. The small limbs, from the size of one's arm downward to the diameter of a finger, are trimmed with nicety; then they are sorted into bundles of similar size and length which when neatly bound with withes go into the market as material for all manner of small wooden articles, such as chair-backs, handles, brush-backs, and matches. The twigs and brush, in America mercilessly consigned to the bonfire, are themselves sorted into withes and fagots. Nothing that is wood is lost, not even the hedge trimmings. To one familiar with the wasteful fashion of American lumber-camps, — by the way, the English smile at our use of the word "lumber," which by them is applied only to rubbish, — this extreme care and precision of English forestry practice is full of interest. When wood in America has become as scarce as it is in England, we shall be practising the same cautious methods.

South of Alice Holt is Dockenfield, a considerable hamlet of squatters, nestled in a pretty vale. In early days, land was cheap, with plenty to spare, and for various economic and political reasons there was from time to time a shifting of rural populations; wanderers would build their huts in retired spots and settle down anew. In time, if undisturbed by the lord of the manor, they acquired users' rights, which were marketable; thus their holdings gradually came into the hands of others, so that these cottagers of the present day,

though still styled squatters, have irrevocable freehold rights. This sort of squatter acquisition was the subject of prohibitory legislation forty years ago, and has not since been permissible.

English scenery is full of surprises. It is a continent in miniature. We have thus far, in short distance, been over fens and plains and rolling downs, through heavy forests and darkling lanes, threading sweet valleys and fertile meadows, and now there is reserved for us a blasted heath. To the east of Dockenfield lie great stretches of wild land, studded with thorny furze and carpeted with heather, — later, to be a rolling wilderness of yellow and purple bloom, but now indescribably black and dreary. Here and there, in damp little nooks sheltered by lichen-covered rocks, ferns luxuriate, the delicate waving fronds contrasting strongly with their sombre surroundings.

In the centre of the wilderness is Frensham Pond. It is elliptical in form, three miles in circumference, and set in a basin whose sloping rim of dingy brown is relieved by great gashes of exposed white sand, which men were at work loading into carts. The pond is a considerable summer resort for Hampshire folk, and a small fleet of sail and row boats is now idly anchored off the pier of a summer hotel. I should imagine that when the gorse and heather are gay with blossom, this heath might be a cheerful playground for the people; at present it is rather awesome.

After a pleasant tea in the hotel, we found agreeable walks in the neighborhood, and I chatted by the way-side with two gentlemen friends of our host, one of whom had two sons in Nebraska, and in consequence displayed a fair understanding of "The States." He

knew his Bryce, and talked intelligently of political and social problems in America.

The drive home in the evening was most charming. Frequently making short cuts, we often were in some of the hollow lanes which White has made famous. Narrow ways they are, well hedged, and deep worn, — partly by centuries of travel, but still more because they are the open drains of the country, and have been gullied by the floods of a thousand years. Where dark and damp and mayhap bowered by overhanging copse they are the home of the fern and the ivy; in the sunny stretches may be found the wild-flowers of the district, while in hedge and copse are birds' nests without number. Happy hunting-grounds these for botanists and ornithologists.

At Kingsley, a neighborhood of farmhouses too thinly scattered to be called a hamlet, we peered through the windows of an abandoned church, the smallest we have seen on the island. 'The chancel is perhaps six feet square; the few pews have high, straight walls, and there is a crude stone font, unmistakably of the reign of John. I know a certain American historical museum that would be proud enough to have on exhibition that ancient font, and I was so wicked as to regret that it was too ponderous to steal. W—— thought she discovered the grave of an ancestor in the diminutive, heaped-up churchyard; but before she could sketch the fragment of a slab, rain fell, and we regained our seats in the trap.

At Binsted, a thoroughly rustic village of the olden sort, the curate came out to greet the party, and invited "the Americans" to see his church. The rain had ceased; but darkness was fast settling upon us, and we

hardly did justice to the many historic treasures under the charge of Mr. W——, who is a refined, scholarly gentleman, and a well-versed antiquarian. There are many such in the English Church, along with others who are not so creditable to the Establishment.

Tuesday, 2d. We visited our host's Millcourt farm to-day. It is a beautiful combination of hill, valley, stream, and wooded lane. There are some fine horses there, of which I took several photographs. The rest of the day was spent in walks along the river Wey, and in visiting the town. We were much interested, among other things, in the Mechanics' Institution, which supports a public library, lecture-hall, and museum, and in many ways exerts a beneficent influence in the community.

Wednesday, 3d. In the morning our host took me in his dog-cart on a most delightful roundabout drive. We explored several hollow and rocky lanes, stopped to see a party of men ploughing one of his fields by steam-power, visited a great beech-tree, which, four feet above the ground, is twenty-one feet in circumference, and wound up with a general inspection of operations on Millcourt Farm.

A curious old barn at Millcourt, bearing a sculptured inscription to the effect that it was built for a monastery in 1687, was an interesting relic. One meets at every turn such practical evidences as this of the great age of all he sees. To an American, born in a land where monuments of human occupation are comparatively new, these things seem more impressive than to the English, who have grown up in an atmosphere of antiquity. This Millcourt barn was built in the year of the Connecticut "Charter Oak" incident, when

Andros was governor of New England. Many things have happened in the world since then.

With a wagonette full of merry folk, — why is it that the English are represented as “taking their pleasures sadly”? — we had a grand drive this afternoon. Our path lay through Chawton, Farringdon, and East Tisted — friends of last week — out to the great hill known as Old Lytton. Boldly jutting out to the north from a long range of downs, it commands a sweep of country embracing three quarters of the circling horizon. We were assured we were looking into several shires. It is certain we could count the spires of parish churches by the dozen in this grand panorama of hill and vale, and detect villages and hamlets on every hand, — vermilion splashes in billows of greenery.

It is needless to add that we had lunch on Old Lytton, — Englishmen always lunch on the slightest provocation, and we had come prepared for two repasts of this character. Under the shelter of a hedge, back from the wind-swept bluff, we spread our cushions and cloths in the grassy lane, opened the hamper, and were at once the envy of a shepherd boy, who with his collie guarded the Lytton flock, and furtively watched us through a hole in the hedge. It required but slight encouragement from the ladies to induce the lad to come to the opening for a liberal supply of bread and buns, and later for a cup of cold tea. His mumbled “Thankee, mum!” as he wiped his mouth with the back of a great brown hand, had a cheery note in it, and it was evident he considered the entertainment a rare feast.

Not far away, towards Petersfield, is Stoner Hill,

where a superb drive zigzags down through a ravine, the steep, corrugated slopes of which are crowded with lusty forest-trees, — beech, lime, oak, aspen, maple, and horse-chestnut. The road is a fine bit of engineering, and through gaps in the lower wall of foliage are bewitching views of forest, dell, and glade, kaleidoscopic in variety of form and color.

At the villages of Steep, Liss, and Greatham, we had pictures of rustic life quite undisturbed by modern progress: the quaint wayside inns, with swinging signs on which are depicted creatures unknown to any standard work on natural history, — blue lions, red swans, and flying dragons; the laborers, with straps below their knees to allow their trousers to bag, and thus facilitate stooping; the long, cumbrous farm-wagons, high at front and back like a Norse Viking barge, and each with its owner's name conspicuously painted on the head-board and along the side, — a police regulation, so that the carter may be identified in case of accident; mechanics tramping homeward at the supper hour, with their tools in coarse, flat baskets slung at back; red-coated huntsmen and whips, out in the cool evening on their trim hunters, exercising the straggling pack in a sharp dash along the highway; and men and women at work, after hours, in the "allotment patches," — little strips of kitchen-gardens hired from the squire, on the outskirts of the villages.

At Woolmer, we enter the black moorland again, which in the twilight looks dreary enough, as it stretches afar off to the dark horizon on the east. The hamlet, a scattered community of squatters, often housed in uninviting hovels, is hard by a pond and surrounding

marsh, said to be a favorite resort for black-cock and other game. Our host, like most Englishmen of his class, dotes on sport, and tells us many a tale of mild adventure on the Woolmer moor.

Earl Selborne's estate is just at hand, as we turn westward towards home. His Lordship must have spent a goodly fortune in his not altogether successful efforts to make a section of this wilderness blossom as the rose. His house and grounds are finely laid out and planted, but the underlying sand gleams through uninvitingly at every chance.

There was time enough left before darkness set in fully to do justice to the neighboring village of Selborne, made classic ground by Gilbert White, rector and naturalist. It is pleasing to learn that the scene of his lifework is still largely visited by his admirers, English and American, and that his "Natural History of Selborne" retains its hold upon the book-market.

Thursday, 4th. The arrangement inaugurated at Canterbury, for shipping our trunk and bag ahead of us by rail, works well, and is a great comfort. We sent them on again to-day, hoping for an early start on the road to-morrow.

With a pair of ponies attached to the wagonette we had our last drive this afternoon, and covered thirty-five miles to Aldershot and Farnham (in Surrey) and back. It is good to know that the spirited little beasts will have a rest of several days after this, although they looked ready enough, after the groom had rubbed them down to-night, to start on another long journey.

We had a comprehensive view of the rolling Aldershot country from the high ridge known as the Hog's

Back. The town itself, laid out on a broad plain below, is smart and commonplace. Her Majesty's scarlet and gold are conspicuous everywhere in the street crowds, and lend brilliancy to the scene. The town has grown up about the great camp, now several miles square and capable of accommodating twenty thousand soldiers. The central barracks are interesting, their especial features being glass-roofed arcades between the several buildings, for drilling under in wet weather. English troops present a noble appearance *en masse*, being well drilled and rather gorgeously attired. Taken individually, however, the men are much the same as in other armies, in the main raw country youths, with apparently few ideas beyond the tactics, and looking awkward in uniform. Privates of the Grenadiers, the Horse Guards, the Black Watch, and a few other regiments whose men are picked, are, when apart from their fellows, rather glorified by their military clothes, but they are exceptions. English officers, on the other hand, are for the most part fine-looking gentlemen, who will stand personal inspection in full-dress uniform, and duly impress you.

Farnham (seven thousand inhabitants) is the centre of a hop-growing district which is second in importance to Kent alone. Wherever you look, the landscape is black with poles, — up the hill-slopes, down in the valley, crowding to the very back doors of the houses, stretching off in all directions, till your head fairly swims at the sight of this great forest of sticks.

At Farnham is a castle which has a keep of the thirteenth century, but the greater part of the present structure dates from the Commonwealth period ;

the moat is well-preserved, and one of the best we have seen. We had a most delightful walk through the large park, which has some grand oaks and beeches of great antiquity and a considerable herd of tame deer. The townsfolk use the park with the utmost freedom as a recreation-ground; but the castle, now the palace of the Bishop of Winchester, is open to the public only in the absence of the episcopal family.

The Bush Inn, where the ponies were baited while we were walking about Farnham, is a thoroughly characteristic English country tavern of the larger sort, and its arrangements strongly reminded me of familiar descriptions of such in Dickens and Thackeray. Our host kindly introduced me in the courtyard to a number of leading farmers of the country-side, bright, talkative gentlemen, the most of them rotund and jolly, possessed of an intelligent curiosity about America, but nevertheless frequently confounding "The States" with Canada, — not always sure which is the most important, — and apparently ranking us in dignity with Cape Colony and Australia. They read the "London Standard" before breakfast every morning, support Lord Salisbury to a man, and grumble at a free-trade policy which allows American beef and grain — "wretched poor stuff, you know!" — to compete with honest British products and thus ruin the agricultural interests.

It will be hard to tear ourselves from such surroundings as we have been luxuriating in these past five days. We have met a host of pleasant people. Our days have been spent in walks and drives in

Hampshire streets, through Hampshire lanes, and over Hampshire downs ; our evenings in delightful social gatherings. We have been here long enough to become attached to folk and town. To resume our journey to-morrow morning, again to lodge among strangers, will be something akin to leaving home ; and possibly Fate may never again turn our steps this way.





CHAPTER V.

WINCHESTER AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

WINCHESTER, *Friday, June 5.* It was eleven o'clock this morning when, amid a chorus of farewells at the lodge gate, we mounted our machines and had a merry spin for a few miles, out through Alton and Chawton, and over the Winchester road to the foot of Ropley Hill. Our host persisted in following us thus far in his dog-cart, and gave us and our wheels a ride to the summit. It was most welcome assistance, for Ropley presents a stretch of stiff up-grade for fully three miles. Left to ourselves, we henceforth had a good road, chiefly with down-grades, right into Winchester, which is eighteen miles from Alton.

In an hour and a half, with several stoppages, we were at New Alresford (pronounced *Awlsf'd*), somewhat over halfway. Here we hunted up other friends, and two hours were spent in dinner and visiting, — a pleasant episode in a cycling day. There is pretty scenery hereabout, with heavy woodlands, numerous ponds and springs, and a rare luxuriance of

vegetation. The peaceful Itchen, known to every English angler as one of Izaak Walton's streams, has its rise in this region. I found bits along its bank which I was glad to catch in my camera during some brief glimpses of sunlight, — to-day has been cloudy, as a rule, with frequent spats of rain.

We had some odd-named villages on our path this afternoon, — Itchen Stoke, Itchen Abbas, Martyr Worthy, Abbot's Worthy, King's Worthy, and Head-born Worthy. Delightful little places are the most of these, with beautiful suburban villas in the neighborhood; occasionally a small factory; cheerful thatched and red-tiled cottages; not a few smart country shops; tasteful, vine-covered middle-class houses, in narrow plats, intrenched by high walls and solid wooden gates, each bearing some fanciful name, for everything better than a laborer's cottage is labelled in England. Rose Villa, Woodbine Lodge, Maplehurst, Beechwood, The Cedars, are favorites; while Trafalgar, Balaklava, and Tell-el-kebir, tell the story of retired officers on half-pay, here spending the balance of their days in rustic peace.

At half-past five o'clock we were in Winchester (twenty thousand inhabitants). The old cathedral city, which has been a place of note since before the Roman invasion, has an inviting look, as from King's Worthy we see it perched afar off on a chalky hill-slope, the Itchen softly flowing at its feet.

Our inn is The George, — there must be thousands of George Inns in England. It is a time-honored hostelry, recently fitted with modern conveniences, but yet retaining the architectural features for which old English inns have long been celebrated in song

and story. There is something so delightful about these coaching taverns of the olden style that one loves to linger over them in description ; and we daily leave them regretful that the hour of parting has come, and that we may not hope to sit at their boards again for these many years.

Winchester Cathedral by twilight is singularly impressive. It is of such enormous size and simple grandeur as to strike the beholder with awe. We thought the southwest view from the deanery rather the best of all.

The Itchen is not far away. On the right is a broad footpath running with the narrow stream, and beyond it are pretty cottages set back amid flower-gardens. To the left, the high walls of villas come to the river's edge, and now and then rustic bridges lead from the footpath over to their carefully fastened gates, giving an air of social exclusiveness. Over the railing which protects the path, a hundred or more men and boys were angling for trout, — not in the secluded fashion of gentle Izaak, but noisily and with much contention, for there was at once a crowding to the spot whence a fish had just been landed, and a rivalry for standing-ground, in the hope to catch his companions. We had one of the Itchen trout for supper. It is quite different from the speckled brook trout of America, and we thought by no means so delicate.

SANDOWN, ISLE OF WIGHT, *Saturday, 6th.* At Winchester this morning our first visit was to the Hospital of St. Cross. At the porter's lodge we leaned over the half-door and applied for the dole of bread and ale, which since the twelfth century has here been

dealt out to every wayfarer who seeks it before the daily quantum is exhausted. The bread was fair, — we have not yet found poor bread in England, — but the ale was of the kind not calculated to induce the wayfarer to apply twice. The porter's wife was in charge, and seeing that she was excited and apparently in great sorrow, we asked the cause of the brown-gowned guide to whom she assigned us. "'Er 'oosban' be bad, poor chap, an' not loike to be better!" Later we learned that he was "in a dyin' way." It seems a snug refuge, here at St. Cross, for human craft worsted in the storms of life; but Death is close at hand for those who enter, and they are ever in the shadow of the tomb.

In 1136 Bishop Henry of Blois instituted this hospital as a home for thirteen poor men, who were to be well-fed in the fashion of that day, among their allowances being "a gallon and a half of *good* small beer *per diem*," and with it a certain amount of "wastel-bread" or ale-cakes, — Shakespeare has fond reference to "cakes and ale." As a matter of fact there are now seventeen resident "brothers," — thirteen in brown gowns, on the "old foundation" of Blois, and four black-gowned brothers, who are maintained on some more recent endowment. In addition to these, one hundred indigent Winchester men of good character receive outdoor relief in the form of food, which is doled out to them daily at the hospital kitchen, to be taken to their homes. Our brown-gowned guide, a cheery old man of seventy-two, looked quite distinguished in his tall silk hat, graceful robe decorated with a large silver cross hung from a ribbon on his breast, and neatly polished

shoes ; but he was a masculine Mrs. Malaprop. He informed us, for instance, that the resident brothers must be communicants of the Church of England, but "houtsoide relievers moight be of any demonstration."

The institution founded by Blois was at first managed by the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. Their rule was unsuccessful, but William of Wykeham — Winchester's greatest bishop (1366-1404), and now almost regarded as her patron saint — put it on its feet again. Then Cardinal Beaufort took hold of St. Cross, and made upon it an impress which remains to this day.

In the earlier centuries of English history it was far more difficult than now for a man suffering reverses to recuperate his condition, and institutions like St. Cross were genuine charities. In this age one cannot but fear that they foster improvidence, and are subject to abuse. Beaufort was a practical statesman, and instituted one most important reform in establishing the præcedent, still followed, of selecting for beneficiaries "chiefly such as have seen better days, but who have fallen into the world's neglect by misfortune, or that indescribable decay against which no human foresight can guard, and not by crime or profligate extravagance."

Brown-gown said that the selection in these days rested with a board of distinguished gentlemen. Upon the death of a resident brother, an election is had for a successor, a certain time being given applicants to send in their testimonials of good standing. I understood him to say that competition was restricted to the diocese of Winchester. Brown-gown had been

for forty years clerk of his parish ; he had "nivver bin oop afoor their honors, the magistrates," and "'ad leev'd a decint life as ivver a mon leev'd," but he and his wife had not seemed to get on in the world after once losing some little property. So he applied for a life berth in St. Cross, backed by the testimonials of his rector, "an' a heap o' gen'lemen." Thrice he applied in succession ; the third time he won, over the heads of sixty-two competitors, and as the chubby old man hobbled before us, leaning on his staff, he gleefully chuckled at his success. Several times thereafter, in the midst of describing some architectural antique, he would turn to us with a broad grin and punctuate his remarks by smartly tapping the floor with his stick, "Ay, ay, zur ! There been seexty-two ithers o' thim, m'am, and I woon !"

When Beaufort and the poor brothers broke bread together, as they often did, — if the traditions of the hospital are to be accepted, — there were right merry times in the fine old oak-panelled dining-hall. A mixture of gin and beer appears to have been their favorite tippie ; and in a glass case are still exhibited the great leathern jacks, which on these festal occasions held the drink that was sure at last to lay them all, bishop and alms-men, under the table together. Beaufort's tankard, his wooden candlesticks, his salt-cellar, his old chair, even the pewter plates off which he ate, are shown with pride, and many the quaint tale the brothers of to-day tell concerning them.

Our brother dwelt with unction on "ther good ol' toimes o' Card'n'l Beaufort ;" and I fancied a note of regret as he said there were now each year but four "gaudy days" on which the brethren dined in

state together off an eighty-pound roast, — Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and Michaelmas. Their food to-day is ample for aged people not engaged in manual labor. Four times a week — Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday — they have a meat dinner. This is cooked by the hospital servants in the great fourteenth-century kitchen, redolent with memories of Beaufort, and is spread on the dining-hall table. Taking his turn at the best cut, each brother is given his share of meat and vegetables on a large pewter platter, and this he takes to his rooms. All other meals are prepared at his own domicile, and are of a simple character.

The brethren live in a long range of pretty stone cottages, off each entry being two suites of apartments, — a bedroom and sitting-room being assigned to each couple, for the brothers are allowed to bring their wives with them. The latter, however, must retire from the hospital on the deaths of their husbands, — a regulation which is bitterly commented on by the beneficiaries. In addition to the food and clothing, the inmates are given a small sum of pocket-money from the endowment income, which is thoroughly in keeping with the general policy of treating them like a parcel of children. A part of this money is in lieu of the old-time quantum of gin and ale, now discontinued. They are nevertheless allowed to purchase and bring home kegs of beer, the managers preferring this to seeing their wards smuggle in bottles and jugs.

The curious old Norman church of the hospital, now somewhat over-restored, the galleried leper ward, and the various public buildings attached to the institution, we were much interested in and long examined ;

but regarding them I can say nothing in my journal that cannot be found in guide-books, and these we can easily read up again whenever the picture of St. Cross grows dim within us. The practical workings, however, in our own day of this twelfth-century charity we have nowhere found described, and were glad to see so much of them at close range.

Recrossing the intervening meadows of the Itchen, bursting with springs and difficult to keep within the several channels to which drainage engineers have elaborately sought to confine it, we entered the cricket-ground of Winchester School. Built by William of Wykeham in the last quarter of the fourteenth century as a school preparatory to New College at Oxford, the older buildings remain practically unaltered, although the institution has grown since Wykeham's day, and holds high rank in England. There are now taught here about five hundred boys between the ages of eight and seventeen. Only a fraction of these have residence in the college. The favored ones are distinguished from those who dwell outside with the masters, by wearing gowns. As a rule, the pupils of Winchester are a fine-looking, manly lot of boys.

Many of their customs strike an American as odd survivals of the past. For instance, when passing through the "lady quadrangle," in which there is perched, over a fourteenth-century archway, a stone image of the Virgin, all but the Seniors doff their hats, but these scholastic autocrats stalk through the court resolutely covered. We saw the rude stone trough in which, up to forty years ago, the scholars were compelled to wash themselves in all seasons. The boys do not study in their dormitories. Here and there are cosey

study rooms, each arranged for ten lads at their books with a petty officer in charge. The great school bears many evidences of its once having been a monastic adjunct, — notably the secluded cloisters, in the centre of which there yet remains, in perfect condition, the old chapter-house, said here to be the only one of the kind preserved entire in England. Some of Cromwell's officers had been scholars at Winchester School, which accounts for its having withstood the ravages of revolution better than any other institution in England.

The cathedral, the dominant feature in the landscape, we found quite as impressive by day as in the twilight. But amid the splendor of nave and choir and chantries and hoary effigies of priestly and secular notables, and amid all the historic memories which crowd upon one within this ancient pile, we sought most eagerly for the tomb of Walton. In one of the chapels of the south transept, marked by an obscure slab of black marble, we found the resting-place of the Contemplative Man, —

“ Whose well-spent life did last
Full ninety years and past.”

We have ever held in common a peculiar veneration for this gentle and communicative fresh-air philosopher of the seventeenth century ; and it seemed fitting that we should, on this our gypsying tour through out-of-door England, be pilgrims at his shrine.

We were under engagement to spend a few days with friends in the Isle of Wight, and it had been our intention to take our machines with us. Reports of topographical difficulties, however, induced us to leave them behind with the ostler of the Winchester inn,

while we took our side trip by more prosaic modes of locomotion.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we were off by rail to Stokes Bay, on the sandy, fort-strewn shore of Spit-head. A small paddle-wheel steamer, bearing a miscellaneous cargo of humanity, bales, and boxes, carried us across the intervening three and a half miles of water, and in a quarter of an hour from Stokes Bay we were boarding the railway carriages on the pier at Ryde. Distances are short in the Isle of Wight, and at 5.46 we were being cordially greeted by our hostess at Sandown (three thousand inhabitants) on the southeast coast.

After tea, and to get an appetite for supper, we had a bracing walk along the Sandown esplanade and beach, and over a country road to Yaverland village. The fresh salt breeze and the dull boom of breaking surf were in strong contrast to the calm of the rural highway, where old farmhouses, beautiful stone mansions, and vine-draped churches seemed in the fading light but structures in dreamland.

Sunday, 7th. A walk along the grassy cliffs to-day to Shanklin (three thousand inhabitants), two and a half miles to the southwest, was full of interest. It is possible at low tide to make the journey by the narrow beach; but at the hour we started the tide was in, and breakers, leaping against the rocky wall far above the path of sand, fell back into the depths with sullen roar. From our vantage-point, three hundred feet above sea-level, we had fine views of the convoluted coast, from the sheer front of Culver Cliff on the northeast to the gloomy promontory of Dun-nose on the south.

Sandown and Shanklin have from small fishing villages grown with most remarkable rapidity into fashionable watering-places. They have extensive and handsome piers and esplanades, with fine hotels and "boarding establishments" on every hand. Sandown is the quieter of the two, and is chiefly occupied by retired well-to-do residents of the middle class, who have, attracted by its soft and equable climate, made the island their home. Shanklin has the usual glitter and parade of a popular bathing resort. It being early in the season, we are rather strenuously informed by hundreds of rival pasteboard window-signs of the fact that there is yet an abundance of room for the accommodation of visitors.

Shanklin Chine, a beautiful little ravine, with waterfalls, dense vegetation, precipitous slopes, and several charming grottos, — in which Nature has been much aided by art, — is, apart from the fine beach, the lion of the place.

Our homeward path was inland, a mile or so back from the cliffs, and through the rustic hamlet of Lake. There are many fine villas on the way, and everywhere a high state of agricultural development. The cost of food is somewhat higher on "the island" than in Great Britain. The islanders do not, in the height of the tourist season, raise sufficient provisions for domestic consumption, and eligible garden-patches reap a goodly income for the owner. The Isle of Wight is Britain in miniature, — there is the same rich diversity of scenery, hill and valley, fen and moorland, forest and meadow, park and farmland, with about the same proportion of arable soil.

After dinner we roamed with our friends to the

SLINKY IN VILLAGE, ISLT OF WIGHT.



Sandown and Shanklin have from small fishing villages grown with not remarkable rapidity into fashionable watering-places. They have extensive and handsome piers and esplanades, with fine hotels and "boarding establishments" on every hand. Sandown is the quieter of the two, and is chiefly occupied by retired well-to-do residents of the middle class, who have, attracted by its soft and equable climate, made the island their home. Shanklin has the usual glitter and parade of a popular bathing resort. It being early in the season, we are rather strenuously informed by hundreds of rival pasteboard window-signs of the fact that there is yet an abundance of room for the accommodation of visitors.

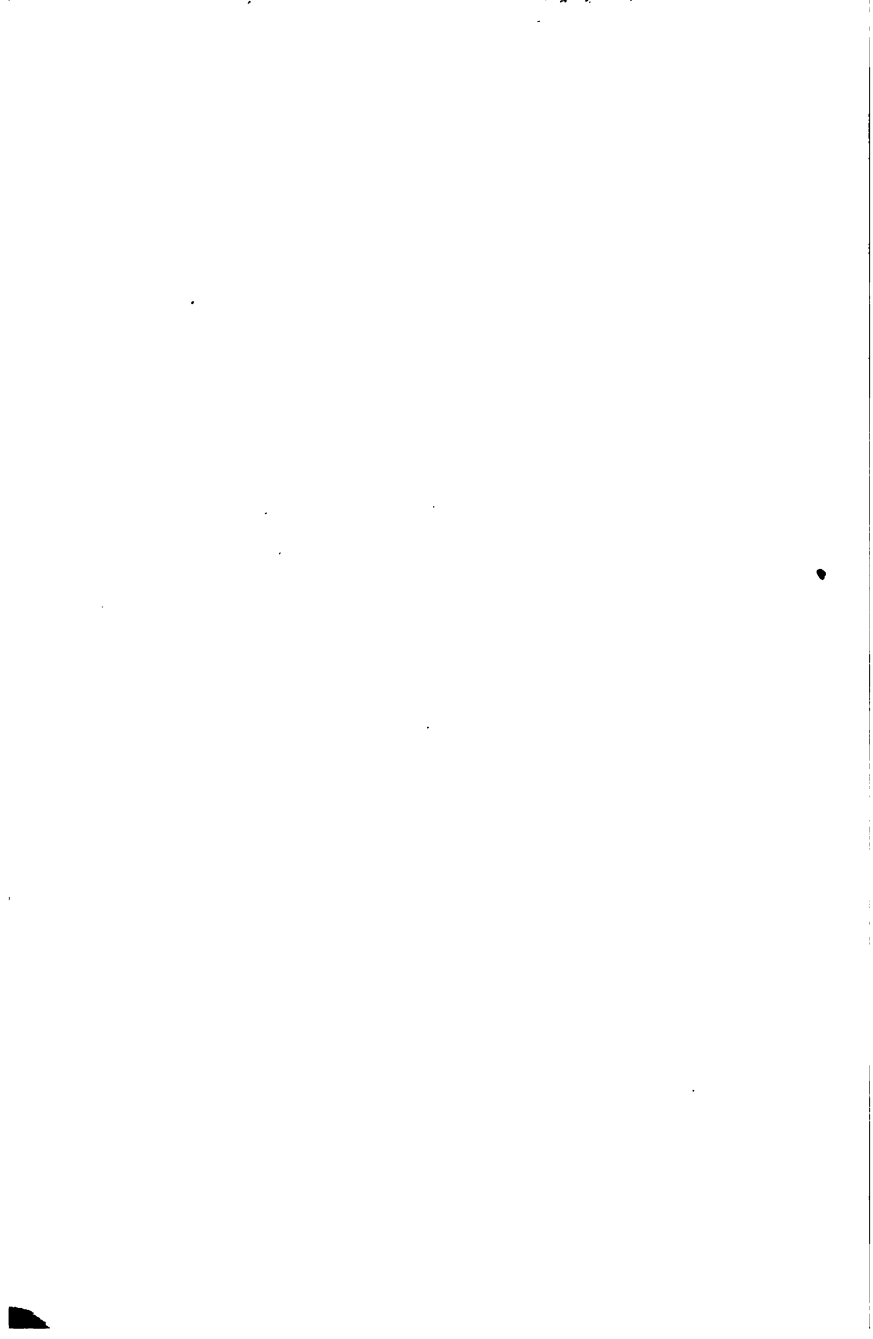
Shanklin Chine, a beautiful little ravine, with waterfalls, dense vegetation, precipitous slopes, and several charming grottoes, — in which Nature has been much at work — is, apart from the fine beach, the lion of the place.

Our road and path was inland, a mile or so back from the beach, and through the rustic hamlet of Lake. There are many trees on the way, and everywhere a high state of agricultural development. The cost of food is somewhat higher on "the island" than in Great Britain. The islanders do not, in the height of the tourist season, raise sufficient provisions for domestic consumption, and their garden-hatches reap a goodly income for the owner. The Isle of Wight is Britain in miniature, — there is the same rich diversity of scenery, hill and dale, green and moorland, forest and meadow, and happy ruralism, with about the same proportions of each.

After breakfast we roamed with our friends to the



SHANKLIN VILLAGE, ISLE OF WIGHT.



top of Bembridge Hill, where there are a fort and numerous outlying batteries. The shores of the little island are well strewn with such defences, and it is difficult to get out of sight of them. We hear too that under the harbors are labyrinths of torpedo mines. England does not propose, if she can help it, to allow an enemy to gain a foothold here, at her very doorstep.

Monday, 8th. A little party of us took train this morning for Ventnor (six thousand inhabitants), fourteen miles southwest, — another popular resort, where the climate is said to be “almost Italian in its mildness, frost and snow being of rare occurrence, while in summer the heat is tempered by sea-breezes.” We certainly found the air delightfully refreshing, although the evening papers reported a hot day over in Britain. Ventnor appears to be one great consumptive hospital. I must acknowledge that the fact of being in the shadow of so much human distress was at times rather depressing.

There are noble walks here at every turn. At first, following the higher of several parallel roads at different levels leading southwestward along the shore, we had remarkable panoramic views of high chalk-cliffs, gently undulating sea, pretty villas and gardens, and estates in which landscape-gardeners have had full sway. After two miles of this lofty pedestrianism — back of us the crest of the down, six hundred feet above the sea, and below us the land descending in natural terraces to the ocean-washed cliffs — we made a short cut to the lowest road, across sloping fields, clambering down long series of slippery stone steps, through a tangled wood hung with vines, and finally crawling

over a high stone wall to gain the desired highway to the Undercliff.

It is one of the most beautiful avenues we ever saw. Great trees, chiefly beeches, lock their branches overhead ; the outlying hedge-banks are rich with flowers and grasses which best thrive in humid shade ; stone walls, cottages, and villas are richly carpeted with ivy, myrtle, and tender parasites ; in rocky dells, through which the road is often cut, ferns luxuriate in great variety, especially prominent being the favorite hart's-tongue. Here and there, peering above garden walls, are fuchsias grown into sturdy trees fifteen feet in height, and brilliant with scarlet and purple buds. As the road winds by the Undercliff, we see land-slips on the right, sharply descending to our path in broad windrows from the beetling downs above ; seaward, through the columns of our overhanging arch, we have soft and delicious marine views, suggesting the Mediterranean.

After lunch in Ventnor village — where Bath chairs were being dragged up steep grades by woolly donkeys blinking sleepily behind great blinders — we had a most excruciating climb up to the railway station, which is set in a gorge at the mouth of a tunnel. Warehouses for coals and beer and other bulky necessities of life have been cut like caves out of the solid gray rock roundabout.

After dinner at Sandown, W—— and I set out alone for a walk to Brading, some two or three miles inland, beyond Yaverland. Near Brading, far back from the road in the centre of wheat-fields, are the remains of a Roman villa, discovered in 1880, and thought to have been the seat of the Roman gov-

ernor of this district. Some very good tessellated pavements are enclosed by a wooden shed which also contains an interesting museum of more portable "finds" in the neighborhood. The Romans appear to have been rather reckless with their money. You can approximately estimate the age of almost any Roman remain in England by the coins picked up about it; here at Brading, the date of the pieces found run from A. D. 222 to 350.

Brading village, hard by, is a quaint old place much visited by tourists; and Bradingites have a more than ordinary longing for "tips." Projecting above the pavement, in the centre of a triangular market-place, is shown the ancient bull-ring, anchored by a ponderous lump of iron with a cavity in which Taurus buried his nose when, in the heat of torture, he was eager for a fresh breath undisturbed. Not far off, in the corner of the churchyard, is a little red-brick town-hall, elevated on stone pillars, with stairs leading up through the floor. Underneath the stairway is a cheerless closet, in whose door is a small hole for light and air; this was the old-time lock-up, and in front of this are the primitive village stocks. An iron railing between the outer pillars now encloses these barbarous relics as in a cage; and tourists come from afar to gaze on them. Yet they come down to us from a not distant past. An old villager told us that his father had seen bulls baited in the market-place yonder; he had, in his own young manhood, been condemned to sit in these very same stocks, but the sentence was commuted, and they had ever since been preserved as curiosities.

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, only fifty-four years ago, she took the crown of pretty much the same sort of England that the first George knew, for progress was almost imperceptible in those good old days. The England which King Edward VII. will inherit from her is quite another land.

WINCHESTER, *Tuesday, 9th.* Bidding farewell at Sandown this morning to the kind friends who had with hearty good-will done much to render profitable our necessarily brief stay in the island, we took the 8.27 train to Freshwater *via* Newport. It is a trip of but twenty-two miles, the length of the island from east to west,—Wight measures but thirteen miles from north to south,—yet there is considerable variety of scenery. Valleys and hills, meadows and salt-marshes, downs bald and wooded, busy little towns and picturesque villages rapidly succeed each other along the line; and the island trains go at a pace which enables one deliberately to study the panorama as it unrolls.

At Freshwater, a country station with a few boarding-houses, we selected one of the half-dozen brakes awaiting the arrival of the train, and were driven westward three miles, at first through shady lanes and avenues, and finally over bare and rocky ridges, to Alum Bay. The route ends in front of a summer hotel, which looks lonesome enough out there on the wind-swept cliffs, the cold gray ocean for a background. The gorgeous head waiter, who came down the gravelled path to meet us, towel over arm, and long side-whiskers streaming in the breeze, was visibly agitated as we promptly took our lunch-basket from the brake,—the bags had been left at Newport to await our

return,—and without ceremony or guide or hotel sandwiches wandered off across the hills, as independent excursionists should.

The country consists of great tumbled masses of chalk and sandstone intermingled, the carpet of stunted grass dotted here and there with dark patches of gorse, now just bursting amid the thorns into rich yellow bloom; seaward, the naked cliffs, lashed by wind and spray, rise sheer above a narrow beach of whitened boulders,—now chalky white, now vertically streaked with sandstone stripes of red, yellow, green, and gray. Off the farthest western point, three jagged, dazzling pillars of chalk, resting on dark-colored bases, rear their crests a hundred feet above the seething flood,—the Needles, famous and ominous among mariners. In a calm it is a wild, impressive scene; on a stormy night in winter it must be a place of fury.

Lighthouses alternate with forts on the headlands up and down the dentated coast. Wandering northward along the curving cliff which bulwarks Alum Bay on the east, we made bold to enter Hatherwood Battery, where three great machine-guns of the latest pattern were being worked in dumb show by well-trained crews of artillery volunteers. These monster engines of destruction cost a deal in powder and ball each time they belch; and the volunteers are permitted actually to touch them off but once or twice each training-day. We had about satisfied our curiosity when a natty sergeant, his little round cap perched deftly over the left ear, politely requested a look at our pass. Having no such document, I obtained, by questioning him, what further information

I desired, and then we withdrew, the heavy gate, hitherto open, being carefully closed behind us. It then occurred to me that my Kodak, which I had commenced to unmask when the sergeant interrupted us, had excited official suspicion. On the continent, an artist or an amateur photographer who ventures within gunshot of a fortification is in peril of being made a state prisoner.

Towering just above our heads was the great black wall of Farringford Hill, on the storm-scathed terraces of which were seen battery after battery, protecting Hatherwood below. Telephone wires are stretched in many directions, connecting these vantage-points, and on several peaks in the neighborhood we noticed signal stations, — modern beacons. It is a favorite practice-ground for her Majesty's artillerymen.

As we rounded the edge of the peak, along a winding sheep-path which leads from Hatherwood Battery over to Totland Bay, there came floating far across the rugged ravine separating us from the Needles Hotel the rhythmic crash of a military band. We now for the first time saw on a distant plateau a little square of peaked tents, in its centre floating at staff-head the standard of the empire. It was the eleven o'clock guard-mount; and soon there stole forth, headed by drums dancing with the rat-tat of "Bonnie Blue Bells," two detachments of blue-coated volunteers, — one ascending to the Needles' battery, and the other marching our way, to relieve the suspicious sergeant in his gloomy pantomime.

We lunched on our lofty path, now that Farringford stood between us and windy Alum Bay; above

and back of us, the lowering peak, dark and staring where bereft of soil by sweeping blasts, but elsewhere blazing with yellow, for in sheltered spots the gorse is in full blossom. The compact heather still is gray and black, but in a few weeks' time it will cloak with royal purple these forbidding flanks. Below us, the mountain-sides grow greener as they approach fair meadows at our feet; off to the right, smooth, beacon-crowned downs, sloping upward from the meadows, line the southern shore; to the left, just around the corner, beautiful Totland Bay glances in the sunlight, and a fresh array of forts and batteries have come into view on every side, — the sea-coast fairly bristles with them.

Soon, as we proceed, Totland Bay is full in sight, and we gradually descend from Farringford Hill to the broad footpath along the summit of grass-grown cliffs. In the central foreground, nestled in a valley where foliage is as luxurious as at the Needles it is sparse, are the pretty red shades of the brand-new village of Totland Bay. It is a charming bit of a watering-place, with a hotel as the chief feature. On a slope beyond, just without a formidable battery into which it seems as if we might cast a stone from our elevation, is another camp of volunteer gunners, — a band playing sweetly at the hour of noon, and the blue and red banner gayly flying above a field of white.

We paused long before leaving our perch on the hillside, for the panorama of land and sea was most entrancing. The mouth of the Solent was close at hand, just beyond Totland Bay, and ships of varying size were passing to and fro in processions through

the narrow way. On our side, the rolling land, carpeted with vivid green, for the most part broke off abruptly at the water's edge, presenting to English view an array of gleaming chalk-cliffs. Opposite, the dark low line of the New Forest — through which we shall be cycling a few days hence — stretches far away to the left; on the right, looming up on the horizon, the wooded downs this side Southampton Water; in front, reaching far out towards us, a narrow spit of yellow sand, at the extremity of which we distinguish gray masses of masonry, — lighthouses, breakwaters, and Hurst Castle, from which stronghold Charles I. went to his death at Whitehall in the long ago.

From Totland Bay we walked across to Freshwater two miles away, over a down, and then along a rustic road, well overhung with elms and beeches, whose shade was grateful, for the day was warm inland. At School Green, a little village but a few minutes' walk from Freshwater station, we paused on a springy bank under a grove of fine trees, again to lunch; we have at last gotten quite into the English habit of wishing two or three lunches a day. Around us, as we sat, marsh-marigolds were growing in profusion, with buttercups and red orchids. A noisy rivulet divided our bank from the village street, on which were a long line of houses of various patterns of antiquity. Barefooted children, lagging on their way to school, stopped to wade in the brook and cast curious eyes at us; women came across the road occasionally to fill their buckets from a stone basin through which water had been forced to run; and a carter with a beer van paused long enough to

draw a bucket brimming full, in which he first soused his great red face, and then watered his horse from what was left.

Taking the 2.18 train eastward we soon were at Carisbrooke station,—you have not far to go from point to point in the Isle of Wight. In chance company with a stout elderly clergyman, who had a benevolent countenance, a suspiciously red nose, and gold-bowed spectacles, and carried a plethoric black leather Gladstone bag, we set out on foot for the ancient castle, which is perched on a considerable eminence over the fields a mile to the east. Our way lay through Carisbrooke village, where there is an old ivy-clad church with a well-preserved Norman tower and a pulpit of Cromwell's time. Our clerical companion seated himself on a rude stone bench in the south porch and mopped his perspiring brow, while we inspected the interior; the old man, who was rather free in his confidences, said that, being in charge of an ancient church of his own, he had quite enough of that sort of thing as a daily diet, and was just now off on a holiday.

In the hamlet nearly every house along the footpath leading to the castle was decorated with cardboard signs advertising mild refreshments, and photographs "cheaper than at the castle." In the little box-bordered gardens, under grape arbors and canvas awnings, tables were set for tea. From behind hawthorn hedges women and girls watched our approach with eager eyes, and then tearfully gazed after us as we passed on indifferent to their wares.

In ascending the steep hill, terrace after terrace, the wheezy strains of accordions came floating down

to us from the castle walls, and for a moment I fancied the ancient fortress of the Lord of Wight had in these degenerate days been transformed into a beer-garden. But on emerging from the wooded path leading up to the splendid thirteenth-century gate, we saw that the entertainment was furnished by half a dozen blind men and a parcel of wretched women, vociferously seeking alms from passers-by.

Farther on, just outside the wicket, other blind men and still other wretched women pester you with photographs at reduced rates, and pitiful stories of the necessity of immediately unloading their stock to save themselves from starvation. Our parson, on coming upon this clamorous scene, set his back to the crowd, and pulling out his purse extracted therefrom a certain number of copper pennies. One of these he impartially dropped, with a saint-like expression, into each outstretched cup or dirty hand. Later I heard him sharply haggling over prices with the guard at the wicket, who, it seems, is the "only authorized dealer" in Carisbrooke photographs, and is undersold by all the rest. Perhaps this underselling is an adroit scheme among the venders to encourage business.

The picturesque ruins of Carisbrooke Castle are the chief historical attraction on the island. This commanding hill-top has been a stronghold since Saxon times, but nothing here is older now than the Norman keep; the principal part of the present walls is of the thirteenth century, while Queen Elizabeth built the extensive outworks. Here Charles I. was a captive before he went to Hurst Castle, and from there to his execution. Two of his children —

Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth — were also prisoners at Carisbrooke after the downfall of their house. In a dungeon-like chamber, which every tourist visits, the unfortunate Elizabeth died ; and not far off was the room wherein dwelt Charles himself. They are mean-looking places now, stripped of all sculptured ornaments, and scribbled and scratched over by sight-seeing fools from all over Christendom.

The view from the walls, which are now crumbled into graceful lines, and heavily draped with ivy, is widespread and beautiful. It is easy to see how, in the days before great siege-guns, it was possible for the one who held this fortress to keep the entire west of Wight in complete subjection. The country roundabout, valley after valley, hamlet after hamlet, lay at his feet ; the master here was indeed lord paramount.

Apparently the central point of interest to the majority of the holiday crowd to-day was the castle well, two hundred feet deep, situated in the midst of the great inner court. A board shed is built over the well-mouth, and in here is a circular frame standing on edge, in which a trained donkey walks, and thereby reels up the bucket-rope. The door is opened every few minutes to admit a fresh crowd to witness this edifying spectacle. The place is badly ventilated and foul-smelling ; the keeper, who manages the performance, and gives each visitor who wishes it a cup of water from the bucket as it comes up, is a surly fellow, and lets no one escape without depositing "a trifle for the donkey," — a figure of speech, the trifle being for himself.

The Carisbrooke donkey is famous, and ten photographs of the little fellow in his whirling cage are sold, to one of the castle itself. Afterwards, as we were wandering around the outer walls, we noticed grazing in the tennis-court another donkey, the exact counterpart of the one in the well-house. We were privately informed that it was in reality a twin-donkey show, each relieving the other on "big days;" the "great original" Carisbrooke donkey, who is pictured in the photographs, died long ago, but his mantle fell on two or three successive generations of his kind, and the rustic public are none the wiser.

It was a pleasant walk of a mile downhill to Newport station. Our clerical companion — whom, I must confess, we had rather avoided, we could not exactly say why — caught up with us again, quite fatigued with dragging his Gladstone up and down the walls and terraces. On entering the town, he expressed surprise that I declined to stop at an inn and take a glass of claret with him, but gracefully bade us farewell at the door. A quarter of an hour later, as we were waiting in our compartment for the train to start for Cowes, the red-nosed parson reappeared, odorous with something stronger than claret, and leaning through the open window, volubly lectured us on the decadence of ecclesiastical art. When the guard's whistle roused him, he affectionately, almost sobbingly, wished us Godspeed, with regrets, in which we could not join, that our course lay north, while his was east. As the train drew from out the station we ventured to peep from the window; our fellow-pedestrian saw the movement and waved his handkerchief with much vigor. "I pity his parish!"

said W——, quietly, as extracting her Baedeker from the lunch-basket, she began to look up on Cowes.

At Cowes we took a small steamer for Southampton, the trip across occupying an hour. There was much life of a quiet sort on the river Medina, from Cowes to the coast,—ferries, excursion steamers, yachts, and row-boats; and on the sloping banks are numerous fine villas. In passing East Cowes, at the mouth, we catch distant glimpses over the tree-tops of the towers of Osborne House, a favorite summer residence of the Queen.

But the estuary of Southampton Water interests us more. The tide is low, exposing great black salt marshes on either side; beyond these the country rises gently, the more abrupt ridges on the east being crowned by villas, and, in beautiful parks, public institutions of various kinds. It is a quiet, peaceful scene, as the sun is sinking low behind the sombre belt of the New Forest; water and land, hill and wood, are aglow with changing colors; in the depths of the glassy flood are reflected fleecy clouds of gold and purple, rudely torn by our black prow. As we steal onward to the dark and busy town lying where the Itchen and the Test pour their sweet waters into the tidal pool, we wonder if the Pilgrims of the "Mayflower" and the "Speedwell" dropped down to Plymouth on such a night as this. If so, their stress must have indeed been great for them willingly to turn their backs on the heavenly places of their native land and front the horrors of a savage-haunted wilderness across unknown seas.



CHAPTER VI.

VILLAGE LIFE.

SALISBURY, *Wednesday, June 10.* Arriving at Winchester by train last evening at a quarter to eight, we left there on our machines this morning at 9.45, taking the lower coach road to Salisbury by the way of Romsey, — a run of twenty-seven miles.

Four or five miles southwest of Winchester is the hamlet of Pitt, where the elder Pitt was born. It consists of four or five thatched cottages, with a small modern brick church, and makes an interesting picture, nestled in a hollow by the highway, with a market-garden in the foreground.

Standen and Hursley, not far on, are straggling and rather picturesque villages of the regulation type; and then we come to the beautiful Amphiel Wood, where for a mile and a half we spin over a lonely forest road, as perfectly metalled as a race-track.

Beyond Amphiel Wood we paused in a shady valley, where a noisy brook was crossed by a moss-covered arch, and elms and willows mingled their branches over the way. A clump of cottages stood back from the road, with diminutive flower-gardens

in front, and across the street was an ancient church, capable perhaps of accommodating a congregation of fifty. This is Crampton Moor, a harsh name for a lovely dell.

From out the church door came the familiar hum of children's voices reciting in unison, and entering, we were met in the south porch by the school-mistress, — a simple, red-cheeked, pleasant-spoken young woman, who welcomed us with native grace. It was a National school, she explained, with forty-six children on the roll and forty-one present, ranging between the ages of three and ten. The children, much excited at this unexpected appearance of strangers, were seated on the chairs and rough benches in use by their elders on Sundays. A cheap curtain hid the chancel from view. In the rear of the room was a low platform, euphemistically styled "the gallery," on which sat the primary scholars in charge of the assistant, a raw girl of some sixteen summers. The little ones were put through their paces for our benefit. The standard of excellence is about the same as in American country schools in the most isolated districts.

In England there are two systems of state-supported schools, the Board and the National. In many villages we have been in, both varieties are conducted. The National is in charge of the Church Establishment, and often the parson's curate is the head master. The Board school is so called because under the direction of the London School Board, and it is strictly unsectarian. The bulk of the people would doubtless prefer the Board school, but the National is stubbornly upheld by the squire, the

farmer, and the parson. It will probably have to go in time, however, as the tide seems setting that way. The Free Education Act will be in force by autumn, and the laborer's child can no longer be expelled for non-payment of the old fee of four or six cents per week. Perhaps it means two glasses more of beer for the laborer himself.

The English State schools are only for the masses; no man of the classes, whatever his financial condition, would think of sending his child to a common school. The scene so familiar in every American school, of rich and poor children, high and low, — and in the North, black and white, — freely commingling in democratic simplicity, can nowhere be duplicated in England. The mere thought of it would seem scandalous here, even to the masses themselves. The farmer and the squire, upholding the National school because parochial, look with jealousy on the Board school on account of its secular and business-like character, and honestly believe that it is over-educating the children of the laboring class, causing them to be discontented with their lot and to migrate from the villages to the cities, in the hope of finding a broader field for intelligent effort. One need not go far to meet with this sort of sentiment regarding our own schools, among a certain class of American citizens.

We were quite delighted with Romsey, — a pretty little town on the river Test (*alias* Anton), with a grand old church, the sole survival of a Norman abbey, founded by Edward the Elder for Benedictine nuns of royal birth, and sacked by the ruthless Danes. It must be confessed that we fairly stumbled on this

choice bit of antiquity, never having heard of its existence until we were within the shadow of its massive tower. The edifice has fallen victim to the prevailing fever for restoration, but there is still an abundance of untouched twelfth-century work about it. A fine nun's door, of beautiful Norman work, with an almost life-size crucifix carved in relief on the neighboring outer wall, is the central charm of the sanctuary. The cloisters, while thrown into ruins by the priest-hating Cromwellians, — who made complete havoc of the lady chapel, — still retain many features of interest.

On leaving Romsey, we paused on the bridge over the Test, here a swift-running stream. To the left, down current, closing a pleasant vista of glancing river, overarching trees, and choice meadows, is Broadlands House, the old home of Lord Palmerston, at present possessed by a cousin of the last lord, for the family name is extinct. Up and down the river, the great estate extends as far as the eye can reach, — hills, woodlands, green fields, and hamlets; a soft, lovely landscape, wherein one might in sweet content dream life away. Climbing the hill beyond, we had charming retrospective views of the valley, with Broadlands mansion and the stately, massive church of Romsey against backgrounds of brilliant verdure.

Two miles to the northwest, we applied at the comfortable cottage of a lodge-keeper for a jug of milk to accompany the lunch we proposed having under the shadow of the wall of a large estate. The woman in charge had no milk to spare, but invited us into her little garden, where we sat behind a laurel hedge while tea was being made. It was served right pret-

tilly, on a circular table, by the merry, dimple-cheeked daughter of our hostess. She told us that we were lunching within Embley Park, once the estate of Florence Nightingale, but now owned by her cousin, a gentleman bearing the familiar name of Smith. Annually many sight-seers come to visit the home of the Crimean heroine; and as the young maiden stood at hand, anxious to serve us,—for the customary tip,—she gossiped freely regarding the changing fortunes of Embley, and her mother's lodge-gate recollections of the illustrious dead.

We passed through several villages this afternoon. The rural communities of southern England have many features in common. I have one in mind—not on to-day's route—which may, though no two are quite alike, fairly be regarded as typical. The squire's "big house" is the chief feature, its lawns and woodlands, improved by centuries of landscape-gardening, all carefully bounded and hidden by high stone walls, which are resplendent in ivy, moss, and lichens; one view alone is vouchsafed the groundlings, and that through the open bars of massive wrought-iron gates,—a rose-embowered lodge in the foreground, a broad and winding gravelled driveway, and a tempting vista over stretches of greensward beneath sturdy oaks and sweeping elms, the bewindowed mansion filling up the background, rectangular, gray, austere, as the old squire himself.

The village has grown up as a consequence of the presence of the big house. Its nucleus a few centuries back was the original squire's out-servants, his farm laborers and those of his agricultural tenants. Its one long, irregular street is still conveniently

nestled at the foot of the squire's homestead grounds, with his park walls for a background, and his entrance-gate vying as a work of art with the old market cross and the spick-span Victoria jubilee fountain.

There are a few plain, two-story brick and stone buildings around the broad market-place, in which live the squire's steward, the surgeon, and the doctor, with mayhap a shopkeeper or two, and a military pensioner; but as a rule the villagers are domiciled in cottages. These are low, story-and-a-half cabins, each closely crowding its neighbor; the walls of stone or brick often are scrupulously whitened with lime-wash, and the dormered roof is either of red-brick tile or of straw thatch. Sometimes the cottage abuts directly upon the street, often without allowance for a footpath; more often perhaps, there is in front a rod or less of flower-garden, separated from the street by a low stone wall and a wicket, while flowering vines are trained over the door and windows. Here and there is a long solid block of dreary-looking cottages for the farm laborers, each householder being allowed a front door and a window or two, with a gay flower-patch carefully screened from his next-door neighbor; for the Englishman, high or low, is marvellously exclusive, and nothing about America amazes him more than to hear that in many of our towns a partition fence is something of a rarity.

One of the interesting features of English rural life is the number of small retail shops. In this rustic village of a thousand inhabitants, probably one fifth of the cottages display something for sale. The man of the house is perhaps a mechanic or a farm laborer, and his wife and children strive to eke out the meagre

family income by selling candies, cakes, bread, vegetables, and knick-knacks. Now and then the shop blossoms out into a small grocery, but in the majority of cases five dollars would be a large estimate of the value of the stock in trade; while frequently one sees a feeble attempt to attract children's pennies by a display of sweets in a roadside cottage window, that surely could be bought out at retail for fifty cents. From the fact that practically the shop-keepers, big and little, in all but the largest English towns, live back of or over their shops, and often indeed in them, and that the women and children of the household are the clerks, if not the sole managers, arises this enormous competition in retail trade. Expenses are light, indeed scarcely more than they would be if the family were not in trade, and it costs but little to make a modest mercantile venture.

An American at once notices the village sign-boards, which bear a phraseology strange to him. "Smith's work in general," is the legend adopted by the blacksmith, who occasionally calls himself a "forger-master." The carpenter informs you that he is a "practical undertaker and general joiner." The dairyman is a "cow-keeper," and sometimes he makes bold to invite you in, in letters a foot high, to "see customers' jugs filled direct from the cow." The word "store" in England is principally used where in America we would employ the term "depot," — in a mercantile sense, and not as a synonym for railway station. There is the inevitable "co-operative store," or "the stores," as this establishment is frequently called; then there are the "potato store," the "cheese-and-butter store," the "game store," etc. Everything

else is a "shop," except the barber shop, which is glorified into a "hair-dressing saloon," and the tobacco shop, which is a "smokers' bazaar." At the candy shops you may ask for candies in vain, for everything of the sort is "sweets," and lemon-drops are disguised as "acidulated pastilles." What in America we should style a boarding stable, is here the only sort of "livery stable" known; where there are also horses for hire, it becomes a "posting establishment," or "post-house;" and the keeper, an important village character, is a "post-master," just as his ancestor was in the long ago, before the modern post-master, as a dispenser of mail matter, was heard of.

Our village has its full quota of mechanics. Those whose work permits them to do so usually keep to their shops, which are either in or contiguous to their homes. One may see the village joiner, who is at the same time the parish undertaker, working at his bench any day of the week, from eight and often six in the morning till five in the afternoon, his buxom wife hard by with her washing or ironing, and their children merrily making dolls' houses of the coffins. In a country where buildings are of bricks and stone, and even the pig-sty and the garden wall must endure for centuries, naturally the mason is the artisan most in demand, and our village has several of this trade. Their work at the farms and on the great estates of the shire often leads them away from home, and they have a tramping reputation akin to that of the American printer. Groups of craftsmen — masons, carpenters, and plumbers — may be met any day on the highways or on the trains, bound to or from their work, carrying their tools in rude flat baskets slung

over their shoulders. A cheap style of bicycle is rapidly coming into use both among these and the farm laborers, as a means of rapid transit. It would be a decided gain if the wheel, in getting them over the ground quickly, might have the effect to lessen their demands on the wayside tap-rooms.

The English journeyman has an unattractive life. Starting out to his work, perhaps miles away, at six o'clock in the summer morning, with a heavy basket of tools and food over his shoulder, he often works until eight absolutely breakfastless ; then half an hour is allowed him for his cheerless meal of cold tea and bread and fat bacon ; at noon he has an hour or less for what dinner he has brought with him, and at five o'clock closes his day's task, sometimes taking a light lunch in the middle of the afternoon. As with the farm laborer, rheumatism early seeks him for a victim ; and at sixty he is quite apt to be a useless old man, with "a crick in his back," a burden to himself and his relatives, perhaps ending his days in either the "union" — as the workhouse is now called — or a privately endowed almshouse. At his best, in the height of a busy season, he earns not exceeding \$1.25 per day. He may have long stretches either of sickness or no work ; he has invariably a large family on his hands, and possibly a drink habit which makes every spare penny burn in his pocket ; the cost of provisions is not on the whole below that prevalent in America for the same quality of supplies, and thus he neither accumulates savings nor apparently wishes to. Let him endeavor to rise above his fellows, or furnish more comfortably his little cottage, — which the landlord's agent keeps so neatly without, but whose interior is apt to be cheerless

enough, — he would in many communities be scoffed at and shunned at the alehouse, as a man too proud for that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call him. Then, again, the "union" will receive him when at last his working days are over; and he looks forward with complacency — or shall we say with sullen indifference? — to ending his days as a pauper. The picture is gloomy enough; but despite all the philanthropists and the Friendly Co-operative societies can do, there are plenty of such cases in Merry England if you care to look for them. To be sure, individuals and neighborhoods differ. I know communities where there are artisans living in their own neat cottages, either on leased land or freehold, and in a few cases owning and letting tenements to others; but this is exceptional. The average condition is as I have stated.

At the sub-stratum of village life is the farm laborer. Beginning work in the barns or in the fields at six in the morning, with three intervals in the day for refreshment, he is generally released at five in the afternoon, although often working much later. Nominally his wages are in the slack season from two dollars and a half to three dollars per week, and in the busy season four dollars, if he be a capable man; but in addition he receives perquisites, which vary according to the custom of the locality or the generosity of his master. These sometimes include free cottage rent, — equivalent to two dollars or two dollars and a half per month, — occasional fagots from the copse, a few vegetables, and a gratuity at Michaelmas (September 29). All told, these gratuities amount, under favorable conditions, to perhaps fifty dollars, making his total income somewhere about three dollars and a

half or four dollars and a half per week ; but it should be mentioned that in some districts we have been in, the "Michaelmas money," of say twenty-five or thirty dollars, is considered by the laborer as his especial perquisite, free from wife and child, and too often is squandered at the public-house in a general roistering.

With such wages for the laborer, of course it becomes necessary for every member of the household not an infant to be earning something. As education is compulsory, certain hours must be spent by the children in school until they are ten or twelve years of age ; but their spare hours and holidays are often spent with their parents in the fields, helping to earn their sustenance. A bright boy of fifteen, who can accomplish nearly as much as a man, is worth a dollar and a half per week. By the day, boys and girls are supposed to be worth to the farmer from twenty-five to thirty cents, and women forty cents ; while the price of "piece-work" in the fields and gardens is such that a capable man can earn sixty to eighty cents, which is considered a good daily wage in the height of the season. It must be remembered, however, that the English farmer employs his men the year around, winter or summer, work or no work, giving them "piece-work" when possible, and at other times paying monthly wages.

Clad in rough clothing, corduroy being a familiar material, a leathern strap encircling each leg above the calf, to keep his trousers comfortably baggy at the knee, slouchy and dirty, smelling offensively of vile tobacco, uncouth in speech and manner, the ordinary farm laborer, while a useful, is not an attractive creature. The brightest of the peasant boys, after gradu-

ating from the local Board school, float off to the large towns to become porters or to go into railway employ, or mayhap to swell the ever-increasing army of the city unemployed, while thousands annually emigrate to the United States or the colonies. And so one finds, as a rule, only the dullards and the old men remaining on the farms, thus lowering the quality of the class.

A conversation I had with a large Hampshire farmer was significant of the situation. He appeared to have more people in his employ, old and young, than he had any legitimate use for, and countenanced a degree of shirking on their part that quite surprised me. His defence was that these people must be supported somehow. If he discharged them, they would "come on the parish" for support; and he, being one of the chief poor-rate payers, would be obliged to help sustain the burden. He thought it better for them and for him to keep them to at least the semblance of labor, and not allow them to sink into chronic pauperism. I found a similar state of affairs in other parishes and counties where I had an opportunity to make inquiry, and must say that this condition of affairs seemed to me pitiful indeed.¹

¹ It is pleasing to note, however, that good judges declare English pauperism to have steadily decreased in the past thirty years. There are now, reports J. F. Wilkinson, no more than 350,000 paupers over sixty-five years of age, against double that number a quarter of a century ago. The Friendly societies have done much towards keeping the superannuated from the work-house, by inculcating "the principles of thrift and self-help and co-operation." These societies have at present, I am informed, a membership of 4,500,000, and funds aggregating fully \$100,000,000. A large south-county farmer and prominent Liberal writes me, after my return to America, "We are doing our best to fight pauperism, though it goes slow."

An American, accustomed to our spread-out methods, with individual proprietorship and every cottage set in its own patch of ground, at first finds it difficult to believe the census returns of compact European communities. Even in this little village I am describing, with woods and fields spreading out for miles in every direction, humanity is packed away almost as closely as it is in the heart of London. The cottages have scarcely more land than one sees in the front flower-garden. For the most part house abuts house, front and rear. Peer into the alleyways or courtyards and you will find houses emptying out into them as thick as they can stand. In the little story-and-a-half thatched cottages two or three families are occupying space which in an American village would be thought too contracted for one. They are crowded like wasps in a nest, often with a promiscuity not altogether pleasant. At first sight you would say this village possessed two or three hundred souls, but find that it can count up a thousand. It is a land of rent-paying and heavy taxes, and the business of huddling into as small and cheap holdings as possible has in all these centuries of experience been reduced to a science.

Having no vegetable-garden at home, the artisans and laborers have had set aside for them allotments in one of the squire's fields contiguous to the hamlet. The stranger approaching the allotment field for the first time would suppose it to be the property of a professional market-gardener, being carefully divided into equal-sized rectangular strips, with narrow paths between. These strips are the plots of the several villagers, each paying to the squire's agent a fixed

annual rental for his two or three square rods, equivalent to a rate of about ten dollars an acre. It is a busy and rather a merry scene in the long summer twilight to see the villagers out in the allotments, enjoying the cool evening air and gossiping over the affairs of the parish, — the men leisurely plying their hoes, the children on their knees plucking weeds, and the women either similarly engaged or sitting in groups hard by, doing the family mending.

The squire's chief tenant is the farmer. "An agricultural gentleman," the county paper styles him, and he most certainly is a gentleman in agriculture. The average American farmer gets up before sunrise to milk his cows, and drudging all day in barn and field, with an earnestness he could not instil into his servants, drags his weary bones to bed soon after supper, and is an old man when he ought to be in his prime. The English agriculturist, on the other hand, leaves this sort of thing to his laborers, and issuing his mandates to the foremen at his several farmsteads, acts merely the part of general manager. You visit him at his home, and you will find that his household is conducted on much the same lines as that of a manufacturer; indeed, he looks upon his business as simply a business, and not as manual drudgery, — such a business as any gentleman might conduct who had the requisite scientific skill, executive tact, and capital.

Farming methods are expensive in England. This sort of management causes more waste than where the farmer is his own laborer; then, again, the English farmer is, as well, a sportsman, and foxes and rabbits, which it were a sin to exterminate, often create wide-

spread damage ; in the treatment of many crops old and cumbersome tools and methods are used, because Englishmen abhor change ; the soil has in many districts utterly lost its native strength from centuries of over-cropping, and is now no better than a medium for the transmutation of fertilizers into vegetable matter ; and we have already seen that the farmer, in his capacity of poor-rate payer, has a patriarchal duty to perform and cannot control his own labor account. When you add to these hampering conditions the fact that the competition of American beef and wheat, French and Spanish vegetables and fruits, and Australian mutton has seriously lowered the prices of native products, it will be wondered how the English agriculturist can longer exist and still pay an annual rental averaging five dollars per acre.

Certainly hundreds of the class have been crowded to the wall in the past dozen years. Nevertheless, in every community there are old-fashioned farmers still apparently as flourishing as ever. The chief farmer of this village I have in mind is just such a man as Punch loves to picture : six feet high, broad of chest, still broader at the belt ; a jolly face, a double chin, and enormous jowls ; a severity of countenance that often is lightened by the heartiest of smiles ; his leathern riding-gaiters always buttoned on, as if just off for a tour of inspection of his several farms, or for a visit to the market town. He loves his ale, but insists in his husky, jovial way on your taking wine. He is a Conservative of the Conservatives, wants an embargo placed on "that wretched stuff from America they call beef over there," and "takes the chair" at his party meetings in the old town-hall. He reads

the "London Times" or the "Standard" every morning before breakfast; and being a devout churchman, after breakfast has morning prayers, to which the house-maids, in their cleanest aprons and daintiest caps, are summoned by the mistress's bell.

The children are away at boarding-schools, in far-away towns, and are gathered in at the family board only at holiday-time. The mistress herself, though guiltless of a knowledge of butter-making or of other laborious accomplishments of American farmers' wives, is a comely matron of affairs, a most exemplary mother, a model wife and housekeeper. She is, with the parson's wife, interested in the practical charities of the parish, — a woman with a serious mission at her door, and ability and heart modestly to execute it.

Perhaps the most picturesque character we shall see in the village is the rector of the Established Church, — the "parson," in the homely vernacular of the district. Now and then we may enter a parish where the living is in the hands of the bishop; again, it may be in the gift of the Ecclesiastical Commission, — a powerful committee of clericals and laymen who have in charge the vast temporal affairs of the Establishment; but in this case the living is the gift of a person in the north counties, who never saw our village, and possibly could not with any degree of certainty point it out on the map. So a score or so of years ago, our friend the parson settled down among these people as their spiritual adviser, without so much as saying "by your leave," and has been here ever since.

It is not always that such settlements produce happy results. It is one of the all-too-numerous

evils of the Establishment that, presumably as a punishment for some of its unknown sins, a parish is saddled for a generation with one in a gown who has, if popular opinion goes for anything, little respect for God or man. But in this case the parson chances to have been well-chosen. An Oxford man, modestly learned, his soul is as benevolent as his smile, and his presence in this far-away hamlet of rustics is to all a living blessing. Familiar with the antiquities of the old gray sanctuary, an earnest student of Nature as well as of man, he teaches many a practical lesson of duty to his stolid flock from the legends of the venerable brasses and the secrets of the hedge-rows, lifting for a time the dark curtain of their lives, and casting a halo of love around the gloomy pile which wheels its daily shadows over their fathers' bones.

The parson's principal parishioner is the squire, who of course is at the core of things, though the social gulf which separates him from the common folk is great. The principal subscriber hereabout to the county hounds, he entertains his city friends with handsome dignity during hunt week, and at the meet is the wonder and admiration of the yokels. He has had his turn at Parliament, for his borough's vote is in his pocket, but tired of an arena so large that he was lost in it, prefers now to serve his country as president of the Conservative Club. His tastes are more akin to those of a farmer than a statesman; next to his wife and children his stables and the subscription kennels are his chief pride. He thinks the country is "going to the dogs with all this free education rattle-trap, stuffing the heads of peasants'

sons with nonsense which spoils them for the plough and makes farm laborers scarce, while it over-populates the cities, causing the working class to be dissatisfied with their lot and yet not giving them a better."

The villagers take off their hats to him as he rides or drives by with gentle Lady Maud, — his meeker and sweeter half these thirty years, but still as bright of eye and lithe of form as at fifty only an English rural gentlewoman can be. When they pass up the main aisle of the church, on Sunday mornings, the congregation rises in respect,¹ from the old laborers in their white smocks, who have free seats beneath the gallery, and nervously handle their hats, to our dignified and portly friend the farmer, in the senior church-warden's pew beneath the pulpit stairs. When Sir Gerald and Lady Maud at last go the way of earth, they will join their ancestors beneath the stone slabs of the chancel floor, their effigies, in correct marble, clasping hands, and their saintly praises writ in words of brass above the communion table.

In the life of our village, next to the church the most notable institution is the inn. A solidly built old structure is The White Swan. Its chief entrance is through the great arch which leads to the inner court, on either side of which are the bar and the coffee-room, with the stables at the far end. Minus the galleries, which are now enclosed corridors, it is pretty much the same inn-court as when used by strolling players in the long ago. The bar-maid comes out to greet you with a courtesy, and turning

¹ A custom now in vogue only in a few isolated parishes, such as the one I describe.

you over to Boots and the chamber-maid, you are led up strange old oaken stairways and through dark passages into the brightest and cheeriest of rooms. The old four-posted bed, with its heavy hangings and its mountain of feathers, invites to delicious slumber; over the dainty white sash-curtains you peer through the latticed windows upon a peaceful street; and just without hangs the painted effigy of a white swan, suspended in a fantastic frame of sixteenth-century iron-work. You have a grate-fire at your command, antique chairs, an old tall clock in the corner, writing materials spread for your use on the mahogany table, and can have your meals, which are always specially prepared for you, and at the hour of your selection, either served in your apartment or in the public coffee-room, where, however, you will in nine cases out of ten find yourself the only guest, — all this domestic machinery being set in motion for your individual welfare. The waiter is your attendant spirit, Boots your willing slave, the chamber-maid promptly responsive to your bell. Of course this means tips, when at last the waiter brings your bill, Boots emerges from the scullery to carry your bags to the station or to order out your wheel, and the chamber-maid, accidentally passing through the court, stops to smile a sweet farewell; but one becomes reconciled to tipping when it brings such service as this, so different from that to be met with at an American village tavern.

This is exactly the same old coaching inn that we have read about in Dickens and Thackeray and "Tom Brown." The express coaches do not stop here, as they did in the olden time, because there are no

longer any express coaches ; but the cyclists and the four-in-hand parties do, on their eternal round of touring through Britain, and they are doubtless full as profitable customers. The inn is conducted almost wholly by the landlord's women-folk. He himself has in charge the posting establishment, without which appendage no inn is complete. His myrmidon is the ostler, who may be seen any hour of the day, — great, careless, raw-boned fellow, in his jockey cap and sporting leggings, — sponging off the harnesses and traps, or chaffing the cook through the kitchen window.

The traveller who is a teetotaller may be in The White Swan for a week together and never see the landlady. Her domain is the bar parlor, and this the bureau of administration. The tap-room, for the pedestrian who "just drops in" for his glass of toddy, or the mechanic and the farm laborer, opens direct from the street, and is severely plain, with its high-backed settles and deal tables ; the counter at the far end, presided over by the bar-maid, is formidable with massive brass pumps which bring up the ale from great casks in the cellar. The privileged few are admitted through the inner court into the bar parlor, to the rear of the tap ; and here we may find the buxom, smiling, bowing, deferential mistress of The White Swan. Here is a cheerful grate-fire ; highly colored lithographs of fox-hunting and cricketing scenes adorn the walls, in company with "The Mother's Kiss," and "Feeding the Robins ;" there is an ample table with writing materials, and the morning "London Times," or "Standard," or "News" is convenient to hand ; easy-chairs are set against the

wall, and a bit of Brussels is on the floor ; while in an old cabinet that may have seen duty in a baronial castle are some specially choice liquors. Warming his legs before the fire, the squire's steward discusses politics with the solicitor's clerk ; or Farmer George, stirring the sugar in his glass, talks with the doctor about the condition of the wool-clip ; while now and then the landlady, bustling about with her manifold duties and her directions to the maids who come now and then for orders, gets in a pleasant word or two with her more distinguished patrons, and charms everybody. There is such genuine honesty about it all, such delightful frankness and simplicity, that it tends to reconcile one for the time to some of the habits of the country.

But this scene in the bar parlor of The White Swan is the bright side ; the dark side is in the tap-room, and in the cheap public-houses, which exist only as liquor-shops, farther down the street. This little village of a thousand people supports a dozen such ; and yet the humanitarians in their conventions annually ask one another what can be done to improve the condition of the agricultural laborer.

There is no longer any use for the rusty bull-ring out in the market-place yonder, — silent witness of how much merrier Old England was than now. But our villagers must have sport, for they are no less Englishmen than their ancestors of the bull-baiting days. You may see them of a summer evening, when not in the allotments, playing cricket or football on the green. There is a half-holiday every week for all save the agricultural laborers, who seldom have such a luxury vouchsafed them ; and then the " 'Arries and

'Arriets" set off on foot, or crowded into donkey-carts, to see the neighboring attraction, be it park, cliff, or castle ruin, where, with their irreverent speech, their beer bottles, and their sandwiches, they make life unbearable for sentimental tourists.

The "recreation-ground," under the management of a club, is a feature of the village. Here cricket and football matches, with the teams of the neighboring hamlet, are quite the social events of the season; and here summer charity fêtes are given, the exercises of speaking, singing, and band-playing being sometimes concluded with a fireworks exhibition which is described in the county papers as "a most brilliant and fitting *finale* to an occasion of rare enjoyment."

In the town-hall they have, for the benefit of the church, flower-shows and bazaars, "under the gracious patronage" of Lady Maud, — for nearly every public entertainment in England must be, as a matter of good form, under somebody's patronage, from the Queen down to the squire's wife. And then there are the annual agricultural-products show, the monthly cattle, sheep, and horse fairs, and the weekly market-day. It is at the fairs that the English rustic shines. There are sure to be athletic sports, with prizes given by the squire and Farmer George, — sack and wheelbarrow races, contests in jumping, throwing, and wrestling, greased pigs to be caught, and a greased pole to be climbed for tempting prizes hung at the top. On market-days, the great hall of the inn, built for the county harvest balls, is set with long tables white with rare linen and burdened with eatables, with a chair of honor for the master of the market. This is the day of days with mine hostess of The White

Swan ; and the chance traveller will have on this bustling occasion to take pot-luck, with neither waiter, Boots, nor chamber-maid at his beck and call.

The English village workman's political arena is not broad. Now and then he has a chance to vote for a member of Parliament, and oftener to attend a political meeting ; for the member is fond of addressing — he calls it "counselling with" — his constituents when a crisis is on in the Commons. It is the manner he has of speaking to the country. The classes do the political thinking and manage the clubs and the meetings, so that the masses have little else to do than to follow their lead. In elections for the new county councils the workman is a trifle more independent, the issues being more easily comprehended ; while the selection of poor-law guardians and parish officers is still nearer to his mind.

Although he is rapidly improving in this respect, the average rustic's comprehension as yet gets little higher than the affairs of the "union." This is the union, or combination, of several contiguous parishes for the management in common of roads and work-houses. The officers of the combination having in charge the former, are the highway board. They choose as surveyor a professional road-maker, in whose hands the business is practically placed, with the result that English highways are among the best in the world. The poor-law guardians have charge of the union workhouse, or the "union," as it is familiarly called ; and it is for the support of this institution and its accompanying system of outdoor relief that the bulk of taxes is paid. Pauperism is England's skeleton in the closet.

Will the farm laborer ever develop into anything better than the stolid, beer-drinking drudge of to-day? Will the cause of conservative temperance reform ever be backed by the stout favor of public opinion, as it certainly is in America? Will England ever be freed from the shackles of Church Establishment? Will the rigidity of caste spirit be always as great as now? In a word, what is to be the future of our village? Such are the questions which crowd upon us as we commune with these rustic folk.

Seeing how deep-rooted are the customs of the English, how tenacious they are of their opinions, how prejudiced against new methods or fresh ideas, one is at first disposed to conclude that rural England will ever be Old England, — the dream of the poets and the despair of reformers. In the light of history, however, we know that the change must eventually come, — perhaps imperceptibly come in a long period of years, possibly come with a bound, as great parliamentary reforms are apt to come.

But though we could easily suggest reforms, sadly needful, what American would wish at heart to have the England we love so well altogether Americanized? "With all her faults," she is to us the mother-land, the cradle of our race, our history, and our literature. With her ruins levelled to make room for villas, her forests, her moors, and her great ducal parks redeemed into farms, our little village the seat of a manufacturing "boom," the bar parlor closed, the peasantry developed out of existence, the squire, the farmer, and the parson no longer supreme in the social scale, all romantic color faded out, who so poor among Americans as longer to do reverence to Merry England?



CHAPTER VII.

WILTSHIRE DOWNS AND SALISBURY PLAIN.

SALISBURY, *Wednesday, June 10 (continued).*

The character of the country changes quite materially soon after you cross the border from Hampshire into Wiltshire. This afternoon was chiefly spent in climbing the steep grades of the Wiltshire Downs. The sky was cloudless, the sun scorching, and spasmodic gusts of wind would twirl the pulverized macadam into small sand-spouts, which mercilessly pelted us on our way.

One weary "topper," near West Grimstead, seemed interminable, and we paused frequently by the roadside to rest, for our well-laden machines are not easily pushed up such an incline. No friendly hedges here, or overhanging trees, such as so often have given us friendly shade in the southeastern counties. Our highway, white and staring, straight as the crow flies, follows the crest of a steep chalk-ridge up to the far-away summit. The treeless plain spreads away on either side, with its dusty gray carpet of heather and scrub-grass; great flocks of white sheep nibble the

scant herbage, each group tended by shepherd and dog; over in the narrow green valleys, which course gracefully through the moor, are just visible the thatched roofs of little farmsteads; and from out a hollow, far off beyond a dark plantation of firs, there ascends to us the merry jangle of church-clock bells, chiming in anticipation of the hourly strike.

A singular red-brick tower, perhaps thirty feet in height and ten in diameter, with a low door, one or two unglazed windows near the conical roof, and the circular wall laid out in sunken panels, crowns the great hill. At first we think it possibly the relic of the Danish invasions, — verily something worth the climb. But a passing cyclist assures us it is “only a shepherd’s hut, or some such thing,” and thus dashes to the ground our archæological hopes.

At all events, we are compensated by the view from this lofty crest of West Grimstead. Beyond, the tumbled country rolls down in graceful terraces towards the Avon, — not Shakespeare’s river; there are plenty of other Avons in Old England. From the sun, now veiled in masses of fleecy cloud, radiate broad, sharply defined bands of light and shadow. Dense black clouds hang upon the northwest horizon, and presage rain upon the morrow. Piercing the heavy mist which hung as a pall upon the river and marked its course southward, the great gray spire of Salisbury Cathedral towered conspicuous in the scene.

Coasting leisurely down the eastern rim of the Avon’s broad basin, we had striking vistas, right and left, — now woodlands, now sheltered ravines down beside us; now great patches of gorse ablaze with yellow

bloom ; now bleak and rugged slopes dotted with flocks which must range briskly if they would gain a meal from this scant pasturage.

Now and then we meet or catch up with such a drove passing along the airy highway ; for feeding-grounds are frequently changed, and the life of shepherd and dogs is not altogether an easy one. An almost impenetrable cloud of dust moving towards us would announce the approach of three or four hundred sheep or lambs, and from without the smudge would come a chorus of half-smothered *baas* in varying notes of pensiveness. Trudging behind were shepherd, boy, and dog, white with dust, all three turning blinking eyes towards us, as perched high on the bank, we would wait for the shrouded cavalcade to pass. We saw a flock of lambs turned into a field just ahead of us. The evolutions of the body, as skilfully directed by the collie, were interesting ; and as three hundred pairs of little brown ears bobbed nervously up and down in a sea of woolly white, during the final scramble through the narrow gate, the effect was quite ludicrous.

Milestones abound in England ; and they are most welcome to the cyclist on a hot day, with many upgrades. But while toiling up West Grimstead hill, we found two stones in succession conveying the information that we still had ahead of us " 6 m. to Sarum," — the local name for Salisbury. At a time when every mile counted, this was most discouraging. However, as we bowled down gently for the last five miles, we soon forgot our aches and pains, and were willing to forgive the mistake, — although it is surprising it is not rectified. Those duplicate stone posts are moss-covered

and green from age, and yet no one has taken it upon himself to correct the error. The English are indeed conservative.

A mile or two from Salisbury (sixteen thousand inhabitants) we reached the Avon. Winding lazily through springy meadows, with several drainage canals alongside, it reminds one much of the Itchen. From the rustic bridge — where we paused for a few minutes, and some young cyclists slowly walked by with their machines, while critically examining W——'s American safety — the view of the cathedral is most bewitching. The gray, vine-covered walls and vermilion roofs of the town houses formed a pretty setting for this most graceful of all English temples, as its stately spire was glorified against the mellow light of the western sky. It seemed as though we had nowhere in England met a more fascinating picture. Later, in seeking our welcome at the Red Lion Inn, we wheeled by the lofty pile, springing gracefully from a generous carpet of greensward, and were now in doubt which was the most charming, the near view or the far.

Thursday, 11th. We were off through the north gate of Salisbury this morning, at a quarter past ten, headed up the valley of the Avon, for Old Sarum and Stonehenge. The storm-clouds in the northeast last evening meant nothing. It has been a brilliant day, with a light, cooling breeze.

A mile out, over a smooth white road, is Old Sarum, one of the most interesting historical remains in England. This ancient fortress crowns a considerable eminence on the east bank of the Avon, commanding an extensive view of Salisbury town and its fertile

meadows to the west and south, and on the north and east of the rolling downs of Salisbury Plain. Westward there is a sharp declivity to the river road ; eastward a steep ridge, possibly an artificial highway, connects the fortress with the surrounding country.

The central ring, where the citadel was placed, was doubtless artificially raised ; it is surrounded by a high earth rampart, and outside of this are the remains of a deep fosse. On the east side of the ring are still observable remains of the masonry of the principal gate, from which there was a bridge over the fosse. A large level area, where the greater part of the city was built, surrounded the citadel, and this again was guarded by an earthen wall and outer ditch. Below these, at the foot of the slope, the suburbs of the city once spread out over what are now open meadows to the southeast and west.

Turning from the highway into a broad pasture to the east of what is still provincially called "the castle," we chained our machines to a sheep-hurdle, and began the ascent. A path upward through a wheat-field brought us to the ridgeway, where a flock of sheep were grazing under the watchful eyes of a boy and his dog. It was a stiff climb over the out-works, which had ditches at the corners ; then we clambered down and up the great outer fosse and entered upon the exterior ring of the city, which is perhaps over a mile around, and now sown to wheat. The inner fosse, V-shaped, is still some thirty feet in depth, its sides well grown with large trees and bushes. From its floor a steep path leads up to the remains of the old gate, through which we enter upon the circle of the citadel. As elsewhere, this is carpeted with sod

and clumps of brush. Two or three damp depressions are all that is left of the original wells.

Standing on the grass-grown ramparts of Old Sarum, looking far and wide over Wiltshire Downs and Salisbury Plain, it is difficult to realize that here on this bleak and lonely hill-top once stood the city; and that the meadows down there, where old Salisbury town and its mediæval cathedral seem to have been forever planted, were then the wilderness. As the strange story of this deserted stronghold comes back to us from almost forgotten readings of youth, we realize how flavorless ancient history is, unless one be upon the spot, and seek in imagination to live it over under the inspiration of the hour.

Antiquarians cannot agree as to who first planted Old Sarum. There are those who have thought they detected here the work of Phœnicians. More attribute the earliest fortifications to Britons, and hold that this was among the fortresses wrested from them by the Roman general Vespasian. All agree that it was one of the principal Roman stations. It seems probable that the citadel itself was of British origin, and most of the exterior ditches and walls Roman.

In the year 552 Old Sarum was captured after a great siege by the West Saxons; and for over six centuries thereafter it was the scene of many bitter struggles and important events in English history. An opulent city sprang up within these circular walls of earth, which was often the seat of the Wessex kings. It is recorded that the great Alfred ordered "Leofric of Wiltunshire not only to preserve the castle of Sarum, but to make another ditch to be defended by pallisadoes." In 960 Edgar here convoked a

Parliament to consult as to the best method of expelling the Danes. In the reign of the Conqueror, a magnificent cathedral church was founded on this hill-top, and its choir "surpassed every other in the island." It was in 1096 that William Rufus held a council here, at which the Earl of Owe was, in the king's presence, tried and tortured for treason. Here dwelt Henry I., in 1100, when to him came Archbishop Anselm, haughtily refusing to do homage. It was Roger, Bishop of Sarum, whom Henry left guardian of the realm, and who helped Stephen gain the throne; but afterwards falling into the disfavor of this unkingly king, Roger was obliged to purchase peace by resigning Sarum Castle to the crown. In the quarrels between Stephen and Princess Matilda, Sarum suffered much, being occupied and despoiled alternately by both parties.

Says Holinshed, "In the times of the civil warres, the soldiers of the castle and chanons of Old Sarum fell at Oddes, inso-much that after open brawls they felle at last to sad blows." During the time of Bishop Poore, who commenced his prelacy in 1217, affairs had come to such a stage that the Pope ordered the dismantling of the old cathedral: "Forasmuch as your church is built within the compass of the fortifications of Sarum, it is subject to so many inconveniences and oppressions that you cannot reside in the same without corporal peril; for being situated on a lofty place, it is, as it were, continually shaken by the collision of the winds, so that when you are celebrating the Divine offices you cannot hear one another, the place is so noisy; . . . and on solemn days, the faithful being willing to visit the

said church, entrance is denied them by the keepers of the castle, alleging that the fortress is in danger." And thus it came about that Old Sarum Cathedral was deserted, and a new church — "one of the most poetic designs of the Middle Ages," says Fergusson — was built on the present site, down by the river-bank. The hill town was ruined, for the people followed the canons, and with the old materials rebuilt their houses under the shadow of the new spire.

For a time the fortress itself was maintained, but it gradually fell into disuse, until, in the reign of Henry VIII., the antiquarian, Leland, could write of it: "This thing hath been auncient, and exceeding strong; but syns the building of *New Saresbyri* it went totally to ruine. . . . Much notable ruinous building of this castelle yet there remaynith." In this year of grace, 1891, there remains no vestige whatever of the once proud city and noble "castelle" which, in ages past, played so prominent a part in English history, save some rude rubble-work where once stood the gate of the citadel.

Descending to our machines, we resumed our journey northward along the white chalk road. Now and then a little hamlet with its clump of trees hugs closely the highway, and a public-house announces refreshments for beast and man. For the most part, however, the country is bare, and there are wide stretches of grazing land, with comparatively scant population. We begin to realize that we are upon Salisbury Plain.

Much of the way to Amesbury — eight miles out — the plain is fairly well cultivated. Here and there is good black loam; but in general the soil is yellow or whitish, and sown thick with flints which

chink merrily in the fields, against ploughshares and laborers' hoes.

For several miles the broad highway is practically identical with the Roman road between Old Sarum, Ogbury Camp, and other outlying military fortresses of the Empire. Now and then it swerves from the ancient way, English engineers having, by judicious grading, somewhat straightened the line. In such cases the old road — now grown to grass, but still as flat as a floor and flanked by ridges of turf — is clearly outlined in the fields to one side. Much of this straightening must have been done in comparatively recent years, for often one sees milestones, now moss-covered and decrepit, still standing by the old path, — side-tracked by modern improvement. The road chiefly follows the crest of ridges, — the Roman ways in England were built at a time when the lowlands were undrained ; there were fewer trees on the shallow soil of dry chalk-downs than in the moist dales ; and again, the Romans felt safer along the hill-tops, in a time of almost perpetual warfare with a lurking foe, than in the hemmed-in valleys.

The country spreads to the horizon in grassy folds, and often, far and wide, not a hedge is to be seen. Small clumps of graceful firs here and there dot the otherwise treeless moor ; and the narrow little valleys, like gashes in the undulating plain, are outlined by dark streaks of low timber-growth. As we proceed, cultivation is more scant, and herbage thinner, while the gorse is stunted and backward ; but in any direction the eye may rest upon broad white patches on the hillsides, indicating the presence of grazing flocks.

We have frequent long spins on the perfectly

metalled way ; and our climbs are not irksome, for the temperature is comfortable on this breezy plateau, and in the clear atmosphere we have wide views afiel. It is difficult to believe that the little England of the school atlases has in its heart so majestic a wilderness. We are apt to think of our mother isle as crowded, and so it is, in spots ; but there is an abundance of breathing room left, and all manner of scenery close at hand.

On a wildly picturesque prominence, whence one can see for many miles over the rolling plain, a fat, good-natured old laborer, seated before a heap of flints, was cracking "metal" for the highway. He looked lonesome enough up here, and seemed glad to stop his pounding for a chat. The view was fine, he admitted, but added that it was a very bleak place in winter, — especially last winter, with the greatest snow-storms he ever saw, sweeping like devils over the moor, and drifts six feet deep before the cottages in the hollows. There were no human dwellings within two miles of this spot ; but over there in the deep-sunken valleys little villages were nestled, although we could not see the houses. A natty young man, well mounted, came along on horseback as we sat by this roadside philosopher, and ambled quickly by. "Thy mozheens, they 'rt bitter thin thaht," quoth our friend, nodding towards the horseman ; "thee 'd zoon out-toire t' 'orses, — ay, an' t' beest o' thim ! My ! boot thee 'st gooten t' wye to git threw thees wurruld !" And he sighed. I think this goodman not wedded to his solitary stone heap ; he has the spirit of a traveller in him, and clearly envied us.

A mile or two farther on, a friendly hay-rick abutting the highway afforded us shelter from the cool wind while we ate our lunch. While thus engaged, several carriages of tourists rolled by on their way from Salisbury to Stonehenge, and I am not surprised that they smiled among themselves at our simple gypsy fashion of doing the lion of Wiltshire; we would not, however, have exchanged places with them. Now and then a carter passed, sitting round-shouldered on his seat, his hulk of a shire horse walking leisurely, as though time were a shoreless ocean. As we were about through, a police sergeant hove in sight, walking his dreary beat between far-distant villages, — for there is no part of England unpatrolled by county constabulary. At first he was a mere speck on the horizon, but coming along with goodly stride, was soon upon us, — a tall, raw-boned, red-headed Irishman of some forty-five summers, a gleam of native sunshine peering through the mask of British officialism.

The sergeant stiffly tipped his helmet as he walked by, and remarked on “a foine day, sir!” The spell was broken when I asked of him the correct road to Amesbury, — an unnecessary question, with the ordnance map spread before us, blank side up, as a table-cloth. The guardian of the peace was soon chatting freely by our side; and when W—— offered him some lunch, his honest Hibernian face beamed with delight.

He had friends in America, he said, but “whither in Philamadelfy or Tchicago, begorra, I don’t be remimberin’, sir! It’s somewhere in thim parts!” As he walked by our side to the top of the next

hill, he asked if we had any police in America, and did they have as long beats as his? His own round was "nigh onter fifteen moiles a day, sir, — a long pull, as you hear me!" It was his duty to visit five far-separated valleys every week, and in each of these places was stationed a man under his control. "I wish, sir," he said, as he shook hands in farewell at the hill-top, and we mounted for the down-spin of two miles into Amesbury, — "I wish, av ye'd be see'n' inny o' moi fri'nds in Ameriky, over there, ye'd be a-tillin' thim to stay there, an' not come back to the divil's own country, an' they know av they're will off! An' if they ax how's O'Connor, — and that's my name, sir, an' I'm not ashamed uv it! — jist be a-tillin' uv 'em, sir, ye seen the poor divil a-walkin' Salisbury Plain loike an onaisy speerit, sir! — an' wishin' good luck to you, sir, you an' your good lady! God bliss you!" Sergeant O'Connor stood rigidly at salute as we whizzed off with a merry good-by; and when next we turned to look back, he was lost to view.

Amesbury is a quaint little village ranging along the east bank of the Avon. Its narrow streets abound in pretty thatched cottages, with half-doors and lattice-windows, and there are the customary brewery and flouring-mill. Amesbury Abbey, in days of old, was most picturesquely situated, and in its prime must have been a considerable establishment. The church is now all that remains, and that is nearly buried in a wealth of old beeches. It shows evidences of numerous changes in the passing centuries: the height of the roof has been frequently altered; old arches have been walled up, and new ones pierced; and around

are the foundation walls of a much larger sanctuary than that we now see.

The Duke of Queensbury's beautiful estate, near by, occupies the greater part of the old monastic grounds, and retains the name of Amesbury Abbey. It was in this beauty-spot that Gay visited the duke and duchess of his generation, and wrote the "Beggar's Opera."

We emerge from Amesbury over a neat stone bridge thrown across the Avon, and enter upon an avenue overarched with lindens; in the deep shade there is a luxuriance of foliage, and tall ferns gracefully nod their fronds in the gentle breeze. On the right-hand side of the road, as we ascend to the table-land whose bald ridges extend far westward into the plain, is Vespasian's Camp. This ancient stronghold, made by Britons and later occupied by the Roman conquerors, is hid among trees at the summit of a hill. They are all much alike, these Roman camps, — great rings girt with earth ramparts and dry moats. In the morning, before reaching Amesbury, we had at a distance passed Ogbury Camp, on an eminence in the open moor. Archæological remains so abound on Salisbury Plain that the tourist can but make selections in the crowd of camps and barrows.

There were several "toppers" in the last two miles to Stonehenge. Stiff climbs were not always rewarded by coasts down the other side, for the road had been newly metalled in places, and we had frequently to walk down over the mattress of sharp flints.

Our first view of Stonehenge was from the summit of a steep down. With the columns of stone rising from a bare slope and capped by slabs, the effect a

mile distant was that of a bed of giant mushrooms. A quick dash down the hill, and then up a gentle incline, brought us to the turf road on the left, which straggles up the side of the plateau on which stands perhaps the greatest wonder of English archæology.

The aspect of Stonehenge is, I suppose, more familiar to people of the English race the world over than any other historical monument in Great Britain. It all seems so natural, so like an old acquaintance, that on first meeting it face to face one is apt to think it commonplace and disappointing. But in wandering about the ruins, and contemplating the weird surroundings, — the grassy plain undulating to the horizon, with ancient military earthworks and funeral barrows crowding each lovely eminence for miles around, white flocks dotting the green slopes, and solitary shepherds with smock and crook standing on hillocks outlined against the clear blue sky, — the beauty and sublimity of the scene come at last to win us, and for the time we long to delve deep in the sweets of antiquarian lore.

We had had Stonehenge to ourselves for full half an hour, — the photograph man, fast asleep in a camp-chair, with his wares spread out on the “altar,” is to be counted a fixture. Just as we had fairly risen to the proper mental altitude of true pilgrims, our musings were rudely broken in upon by the arrival of visitors. There were two or three carriage-loads of tourists from Salisbury, and among them some Americans, — you always know them a quarter of a mile away, — also a half-dozen young pedestrians, hot and dusty; but the greater part of the crowd were Wessex folk of the rustic sort, — “’Arries and ’Arriets” out for a holi-

day. Most of the carriage tourists wandered listlessly about, bought views, and fell victims to the wiles of an itinerant photographer, who had suddenly appeared with his "view van," and stood ready to "tek leddies an' gents in their own traps wi' ther pillars i' ther backgreound." The pedestrians, healthy English school-boys, in charge of a spectacled young tutor, lay flat on their stomachs on a neighboring barrow and sketched the hoary ruins. The villagers tumbled boisterously from their two donkey-carts, turned the animals loose to graze upon the plain, and quite regardless of the solemnity of the scene, produced hampers loaded with edibles and bottled beer, which the young women spread upon the ground, while their "fellers" worked up an appetite for lunch in a hastily improvised cricket game. Stonehenge, thus profaned, at once lost its charm for us; and once more in the saddle, we descended the turf road to the dusty highway.

Halfway down we met an open carriage, but were too intent on our brakes to more than glance towards its occupants as we flitted by, until a lady's voice excitedly called us both by name. Promptly dismounting, somewhat startled by a recognition in the midst of Salisbury Plain, in a moment we were face to face with an old friend and former townswoman. She had landed at Southampton the day before, and was "doing" Europe with a party of Boston friends, to whom we were now introduced. It was a pleasant reunion, out there on the slope of Stonehenge, and quite unexpected, for neither party knew of the other's presence in England. To us, this thought of landing at Southampton yesterday, being at Stonehenge to-

day, and in London to-morrow, was a sharp reminder that we are doing our England right leisurely, and it behooves us to bestir ourselves.

Returning to Amesbury, we sought the river-side road back to Salisbury. Wiltshire sign-posts are generally fingerless, so far as our experience goes, — a fact which speaks eloquently of the wild storms which often prevail here in the winter season. On reaching the open country, a mile south of Amesbury, the bare posts at the parting of the ways gave no hint as to which of several rude wagon-tracks straggling up over an intervening chalk-down might be the path to Great Durnford, where we were to strike the lower road. We followed blindly to the summit, from which the tracks seem to diverge in many directions, finally deciding to follow one which is marked by little mounds of white chalk dumped alongside, a few rods apart, — reasoning that none but the road to the village would be thus carefully chalked out by the highway board. There must at times be wild nights up here on this naked moor, when Wessex folk caught out after dark search for these gleaming chalk-heaps as mariners do for familiar landmarks.

Our judgment proved correct. The ruts in the turf soon broadened into a rough cart-track, down which we later bumped right merrily into a lovely ravine, in which were a cluster of quaint cottages, with yellow thatches decked with weeds, and bright flower-gardens coming down to their neatly trimmed hedges. A farm laborer, with his flat lunch-basket over one shoulder and a rude pitchfork over the other, was just entering a wicket as we approached, and paused to watch us. I dropped behind to talk with

him, — to inquire the way is an easy method of breaking the ice.

The cottages were pretty, I said. "Ay, thet they be! Prettier houtsides than in!" He knew best about that, so I did not venture to dispute this point.

On a bench to one side of his cottage, were a half-dozen conical straw beehives, making a pleasant rustic picture, with an apple-tree bending gracefully over them, and a laurel bush in full bloom; while hard by, roses clambered over a latticed well-house, and a mossy bucket rested invitingly on the curb. I said I was curious to know how they extracted honey from those old-fashioned hives. "They bean't hold-fashion, they, sir! They be in fashion, sir!" he protested. "But how do you take out the honey?" I asked. "We teks the bees, sir!" This annual destruction of the colonies, in order to get at their stores, is quite general here. I questioned him as to his knowledge of frame hives. He had heard of them, but "'ad n't seen none, nor any one as 'ad used 'em." It was an American notion, he had been told, "an' t' ol' way's t' best, arter all, sir, for all their floighty Yankee gimcracks!"

Though a young man, this cottager proved dull, and the same question had sometimes to be worked over into several different forms before adaptable to his comprehension. Most of the working-men we have thus far conversed with over here are quite as intelligent as the same class in America, and have besides a larger stock of native politeness.

Farther on in this secluded ravine, — a deep crack in the wild moorland, — we caught a glimpse to the right of the squire's "big house," well embowered in

trees. Then passing under an arch of fine young beeches, we met another laborer, who informed us that on top of the steep ascent to the left, now thickly studded with beeches and maples, was Ogbury Camp. The timber-growth was too dense for us to see this giant earth-ring of the Romans, but our informant declared that it was a mile in circuit. Perhaps our hollow road, now an enchanting botanical wilderness, was once a part of the great fosse.

A sharp, rough descent, so crooked and narrow that we were forced to walk, brought us down into Great Durnford, — a score or two of picturesque cottages, chiefly thatched and timbered, with an old-fashioned inn, and two or three Liliputian shops. A large farmhouse flanks one side of the way, with generous barns to the rear. It is an isolated hamlet, thoroughly characteristic; and from the manner in which we were stared at, apparently few tourists turn aside from the ridgeway to Stonehenge into this old-time river street.

In the several little villages along our way, the masonry appears originally to have been a sort of pudding of mortar, chalk, and flints. It does not seem to be of lasting quality, for the greater part of the houses, barns, and high walls are rather shabby, and crumble easily.

For the most of the way in from Great Durnford, the road is on a low river bench, steep hill-slopes of chalk by the left, and to the right the Avon, creeping in pretty curves down through luscious meadows. Now and then we dip through beech-hangers, and there are charming vistas, with smooth carpeted downs rising on the right, and the intervening valley.

Halfway to Salisbury, set back in a broad meadow at a bend in the stream, is Heale House, where after the battle of Worcester (1651) Charles II. spent some days in rustic seclusion. It is a large gray, comfortable, vine-clad farmhouse, with an aristocratic air. At the gate, a pretty maid-servant in a white cap was letting out a dog-cart in which, besides the liveried driver, were two or three fresh-looking young ladies under red parasols, who soon disappeared up the hill ahead of us.

Later we passed another "big house," in a pretty garden by the roadside, and catching a view of the dairy around the corner, turned aside to purchase milk for lunch. The sun was close upon the horizon, and our appetite good. Seldom have we more enjoyed the animal pleasure of eating than over this modest sup and bite under a neighboring beech, whose arms, as we sat at its base, spread for us a giant canopy. We inspected the dairy after our meal; it was a model of its kind; and the good woman in charge seemed pleased to receive our deserved commendations.

As we entered Salisbury suburbs, through Stratford-under-the-Castle, at the foot of Old Sarum, our friend of the morning towered grandly against the evening sky. A stirring crowd of historic memories cluster about those gloomy ramparts; we seem to be lifting our eyes to the ghost of Early Britain.





CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE NEW FOREST.

LYNDHURST, HANTS, *Friday, June 12.* After a busy morning at Salisbury Cathedral, we were off for the New Forest at one o'clock this afternoon. Our course lay through Downton, Brook, and Minstead to Lyndhurst, — a distance of eighteen miles. There had been a sharp frost over night, cutting potatoes badly ; but the day was quite warm until half-past four in the afternoon, when a cool breeze set in from the south.

The road out of Salisbury was hard and smooth, under arching trees, and at the tops of frequent hills we had pretty retrospective views of the red-roofed city and the long flat reaches of the Avon's meadows. A fellow-bicycler overtook us a mile from town, and accompanied us to Downton, some half-dozen miles farther on. He was a pleasant fellow and made good company, so that we were sorry when we had to part with him, his destination being Ringwood.

We turn sharply east at Downton, which straggles along the zigzag road for a mile or so, with a far-away, eighteenth-century aspect. There are long lines of

quaint, thatched houses on either side, and in the centre an old market cross that has lost its horizontal piece, — as indeed have most of them in England, — and now does duty as a public lamp-post. The eastern end, near the railway station, — there is a charming backward view of the old town, framed by the railway arch, — is newer, and bustles with corn-mills and iron-works. From here, a hard tug up a short but wofully steep hill brings us upon the ridge road stretching southeastward to Hampworth Common and No Man's Land, and thenceforth we have comparatively clear sailing. We are now fairly in the New Forest, and on the highway which for a few miles serves as the boundary between Wiltshire on the left and Hampshire on the right, until at last it fully enters the latter county.

Our climb called for a lunch, and at the brow of the down we applied at a small, neat farmhouse for our usual quantum of milk. A woman somewhat under middle-age, round-faced, pleasant-spoken, and simple, served us ; and upon her invitation we stacked machines by the hedge gate and spread our luncheon under a wide-spreading fir on the lawn within. Our hostess stayed by us to gossip, with an apology for doing so, — she said it was lonesome up here on the hill overlooking the village, and her men-folk were away threshing. It did not take long for her to learn that we were from America, — a bit of information calculated at once to loosen many rustic tongues that might otherwise remain mute. This interested her, for her sister, a school-mistress, had a farmer lover in Fulton County, Illinois, whom she was soon going out to marry. The good farmwife had doubts as to the

propriety of this proceeding ; but the sister and her prospective husband thought it a pity to inaugurate their joint career by squandering an amount upon his trip to and fro that might well be applied towards fitting up a home. W—— assured our entertainer that she deemed this quite proper thrift, especially as the young woman was first to visit a female friend in Fulton County, and be married at the latter's home. The mind of the good woman appeared easier, and she asked if this place in Illinois was near our home. "Not far," I replied. "Twenty mile or so?" queried she. "Oh, bless you, no! Two hundred and fifty!" I explained that two hundred and fifty miles was relatively a short distance in a country so vast as America, but her open-mouthed wonder remained unabated. To her, Salisbury was far away ; her mind could not grasp a region so much larger than the New Forest.

Here and there beyond this quiet Downton farmstead are the small cottages of squatters and woodsmen, — some of mud, but the most of them shabby wooden structures, half hid in clumps of firs, the rickety palings in front grown over with a tangle of shrubs and clambering vines, in which holly abounds. Lean, lank hogs wallow in roadside pools ; scrubby cows graze freely, watched by ragged boys, one of whom told us he had once been to Downton, but never saw Brook and knew not how far it was away ; the rude kitchen-gardens appear to have a hard time of it struggling against the spreading gorse, which here grows so rank as to threaten the existence of cultivated fields. .

The peasants of the New Forest are a hardy, in-

dependent class, and generally very poor. Until the present century, if a man put up a little hut here, moved in his family, lit a fire, and began to cultivate ever so small a portion of the forest land, he could not be removed except by long and tedious process of law. Often the work of one moonlit night gave a right to the soil that was undisturbed for generations. In early times such folk lived chiefly by poaching; to-day they unite with this precarious pursuit a meagre agriculture, and rival the gypsies as horse jockeys.

For miles together, on Hampworth Common and in No Man's Land, we have from our ridgeway wide views of undulating moorland, now and then lit up by acres square of the yellow blossom of the broom, by occasional sheets of wiry heather, and by great patches of stunted brown grass. Tier on tier of wooded ridges — pines, oaks, and beeches — darkly streak the wild expanse, like wave-crests on the sea. Sometimes, as far as the eye can reach from a commanding hill-top, all is moor, decked in varied shades of brown and green; again, the wrinkled downs are closely carpeted to the horizon's edge with interlocking trees.

At times dense beech woods hem us closely on either side, and we have the prettiest vistas imaginable up and down the broad white road, which often shoots far away as straight as an arrow. In one of these dark avenues two camps of gypsies were planted by the way. We stopped at one of them. The party consisted of two men, two women, and seven or eight children, ranging from fifteen years of age down to an infant at breast. Those old enough

to work were squatted on the grass in front of their picturesque but shabby tents of saplings and canvas wagon-covers, engaged in the making of rude clothes-pins from a porous wood which they called "withey." I gave the leader a penny for a sample pin; but he insisted on my taking six, the price being twopence a dozen, for "had n't I saved him the trouble of peddling that many in the village?" He spat on the coin before pocketing it, explaining that this was for good luck, it being the first money he had earned to-day. A tame young magpie, with its wings clipped, hopped cheerfully about the camp and played with the children. The bird also brought good luck, the gypsies said, and nearly every camp had one. I wonder if they ever heard of a mascot.

On every side — about the only life we see, in long stretches of wilderness — are the stunted half-wild ponies of the New Forest. In groups or singly, they dot the hill-slopes everywhere, — frisky fellows, gray, white, black, and bay. Some, startled by our appearance, run before us on the road, in droves of a dozen; others, nervously lifting their heads from amid the thorny furze, gallop off with clods of turf flying from their heels; some quietly whinny to answering comrades on a neighboring eminence; while many pay no attention as we pass, and, if mares, quietly suckle their foal.

We are cycling over government land here, but there is no free pasturage for this roving stock. These ponies, herded and branded as are cattle on the western plains of America, are only permitted to graze, on payment by their owners of an annual fee to the government of two dollars and a half per head.

The branding and a peculiar clipping of the tail are obligatory marks of ownership, strictly enforced by the verderers. The animals may wander in unfenced tracts all the year round ; but the picking in winter is slight, and well-to-do farmers take their stock under shelter for home feeding. New Forest ponies are in large demand, chiefly in the London and Continental markets ; and one broken to the rough standard here prevailing, and in midsummer condition, is worth to the raiser some thirty or thirty-five dollars. Large horses would starve in this region of gorse and heather, and the ponies are not over-fed. New Forest is also noted for its hogs, which are quite different from the regular Hampshire breed, and have many of the characteristics of the wild boar. They are permitted to run at large in the forest only in acorn time, the government fee for the season being twelve cents per head. Within this wilderness asses and mules are likewise bred in considerable numbers.

Brook — named from the rocky rivulet which flows through the place — is a charming little hamlet of half a dozen thatched houses of Elizabethan pattern, a public-house, a harness-shop, and a smithy, all ranged alongside of the village green. A party of ladies from Lyndhurst were taking photographs, while their coachman gossiped with the blooming bar-maid under the shadow of a monster beech. Brook is the centre of a more thickly settled district than on Hampworth Common. In its neighborhood we wheeled past several picturesque cottages, and on commanding hillocks caught glimpses of a few fine country-seats, with broad meadows, grazing cows of good quality, and cultivated fields, — pleasing pic-

tures, full of varied color and framed by the dark forest.

Leaving the highway at Brook, a rough by-road leads over to Rufus Stone, a mile and a half southward. Passing through the irregular cluster of cottages known as Canterton, we came suddenly upon a small public-house set back from the road, which here degenerates into a woodland track. Rude benches of deal had been erected under the trees; and a rustic party of four—a man, two women, and a child—were regaling themselves there with bread and a tankard of beer, while their pony was hitched to a post at the tavern door. We were tired, evening was at hand, these seemed honest sylvan folk, and the opportunity was good for lunch and gossip,—we never neglect such chances on this cycling trip of ours.

The public bore no sign above its door save “Ann Golden,” coupled with the faded legend that she kept a licensed house for food and drink. Ann dealt in milk as well as beer, and knew enough of tourists to charge me three prices for the jug of the former, which I took out to a bench to wash down Salisbury bread and Cheddar cheese. Our neighbors were soon chatting freely with us. The old man had a round, honest, weather-beaten face, and talked knowingly of peasant farmer life in the New Forest, where he was born and had ever lived, with no care to go farther. His wife sat silently by. The lines in her sweet face were those of a contented disposition; she nodded assent to every proposition of her lord, who was a sylvan philosopher, and, like most philosophers, quite aware that he knew a thing or two. Their

daughter, rather showily dressed, was a bright-looking citified young woman of thirty, with a pretty little girl by her side. She lived in London, she proudly told us, and was only here on her annual visit; father's home was off by Castle Malwood, not far away. This was a picnic day to Rufus Stone, for the sake of her child.

"Father, he tells you he don't never want to move away from New Forest," she added, with an air of good-naturedly lecturing the old man over our shoulders; "but I say New Forest is horrid and dismal in the winter, though it's pleasant enough for a little visit, like, in summer. But give me the city, I say, and the things that's going on there! You can't never get my man and I away from London, and don't you forget it!" Surely this daughter of the forest has been fully weaned from her childhood home.

The father smiled knowingly as he drained the last drop from the tankard and rose to return it to Ann. "T' dorter she be stook, loike, on t' ol' teown; but fer me an' t' ol' 'ooman what knows noth'n' 'bout it, an' still hankers arter t' ol' trees an' t' fresh air loike, gi' us New Forest, say we! Eh, Bess?"

"Ay, thee's roite, John!" and the old woman, smiling, patted him approvingly on the arm.

"Gran'ma, she h'ain't never seen a Christmas pantomime!" interposed little Jane; and then all laughed gayly at the quaint puss. Thus we parted company, the best of friends.

A hundred yards farther on, in a sequestered forest opening surrounded by pretty bush-grown slopes, stands Rufus Stone. The original stone, "set up by John, Lord Delawar, who had seen the Tree

growing in this Place," has been replaced by a triangular iron post about five feet high, bearing this inscription :.—

Here stood the Oak-Tree, on which an Arrow, shot by Sir WALTER TYRRELL at a Stag, glanced, and struck King WILLIAM II. surnamed RUFUS, on the Breast, of which he instantly died, on the Second Day of August, anno 1100.

As we stood in front of this modest monument commemorating an event that proved to be of the most vital importance to the entire English race, there came out to us, from a hut in the heavy beech wood opposite, a tall, jaunty-looking man in brown corduroy, wearing a soft felt hat, picturesquely slouched and with a bit of feather in it, — a sort of Robin Hood merryfellow, who might be brigand or game-keeper, according to circumstances. I was looking for an adventure — perhaps an arrest for trespass, or the collection of a toll — at the hands of this operative woodsman, when he drew from his bosom a package wrapped in a greasy newspaper, and solemnly unrolling it, spread a half-dozen photographs on the top of the pillar. One could hardly anticipate meeting a photograph pedler in one of the loneliest corners of the New Forest, but it is the unexpected that is always happening. As we seemed slow to buy, he declared sadly that business was dull, and for a shilling he would give us a picture worth one-and-three-pence. There was no resisting his persistence, and we yielded to the inevitable as gracefully as might be. Thus he proved a sort of brigand, after all.

It is a pity to take the poetry out of Rufus Stone, and thus to injure the business of honest Ann Golden and the artistic forester, but really the truth must

be written. The circumstances attending the death of Rufus are not fully known ; the earliest historians differ both as to the manner of his being killed and the place of the tragedy, while several of those who vouchsafe many other particulars make no mention of a tree playing a part in the tragedy. But the knowing Lord Delaware, who first planted Rufus Stone in 1745, "had seen the Tree growing," so perhaps it were best to say no more.

Before leaving Rufus Stone, we were witnesses of a lively spectacle of pony-breaking. Two young rustics appeared, each leading or rather dragging a yearling by a long rope fastened about its neck. Behind them came a stouter yokel on a big horse, lashing the frightened colts with a great stock-whip. At his heels a parcel of harum-scarum youngsters followed, pelting the victims with sticks and clumps of turf. The trick seemed to be to rush the animals up and down a slope, the pack of humans the while pursuing them with ingenious torture. Now and then a plunging beast would drag his captor off his feet and prance about like mad, with a sprawling yokel at the end of the line ; but the thick-skinned forester would finally fetch up in a brush and regain his footing. Meanwhile, — the air rent with alternating yells of laughter and imprecation, — the ribs of the wild-eyed, snorting captives were belabored with strokes and pelting, as they frothed at mouth, and vainly reared and kicked and stumbled.

A truce was now and then declared, while both sides, hot and panting, sought rest for renewed effort. In such a pause I talked with these peasants, who seemed innocent fellows enough, although no doubt

merciless fiends in the eyes of the poor tormented. They said this species of breaking, persisted in for a few evenings, was sufficient to crush the spirit of the wildest pony, and I should think it well might. An animal which has once been through this nightmare might as well give up for life and be done with it. As we spoke, one of the colts, that had been sitting on his haunches at bay, gave a sudden spring into the air with a fierce cry, and dashed off, dragging the astonished line-man face downwards over the heather. Bedlam was again in full tilt as we regained our saddles.

Castle Malwood is not far away. It was at Malwood where Rufus lodged when a monk is said to have warned him of his approaching death; but an ancient intrenchment is now all that remains of the once royal seat. From there we went on over the woodland road, to the sweet little long-drawn-out village of Minstead. After that a broad highway, lined with the tall black poles of the postal telegraph, led right into Lyndhurst, the village capital of the New Forest. There were fine runs through beautiful woods and past numerous fine estates; now and then a residence grand enough for a ducal seat could be seen perched on a lofty hillside a mile or two back.

We were at The Crown in Lyndhurst by seven o'clock,—a quiet, homelike inn, but rather more after the fashion of smaller Adirondack hotels than any we have yet seen over here. There was *table d'hôte*, too, and Americans who had come by train. There are many quaint bits in the streets and alleys, but the general impression is newish for an English village, for there are numerous smart, red-brick build-

ings, and everywhere is evident a desire to brush up for the tourist trade.

I fancy that Americans in general think of New Forest as a gigantic wood. There are, however, villages, broad estates, and open moors scattered through it. According to old English usage, — and indeed in legal phraseology still, — the term “forest” designates, not a mass of trees, but any place of resort and shelter for animals which may be pursued and slaughtered for royal amusement. It was only in a secondary sense that the word came in modern times popularly to be applied to the trees alone, as the chief characteristic of such a place. When forest land had been granted to a subject, with the injunction that it was to remain unenclosed, it became a “chase.” A “park” was likewise a royal grant containing beasts, and might be enclosed. A “warren” was a franchise from the king “for the keeping of beasts, . . . hares, coneys, partridges, and pheasants.” Woods might belong either to sovereign or subject; hence, as a forest can belong only to the king, we may have forests without woods, and woods that are not forests.

The Conqueror is said to have had sixty-eight forests, thirteen chases, and seven hundred and eighty parks in different parts of England. The name New Forest arose from the fact that he greatly enlarged this particular tract by taking in neighborhood districts of woodland, and subjecting them to forest law.

New Forest has had a checkered history. With the Stuarts came decay and ill-luck to this as well as to other royal hunting-grounds. Charles I. granted the region as security to his creditors; and as he could not pay the keepers' wages, he allowed them to

cut timber instead. Charles II., possibly influenced by the publication of Evelyn's "*Silva*," saw the importance of preserving the forest for ship-timber, and had a few hundred acres planted to young oaks; at the same time he gave away three of the woodlands to a maid of honor at his court. About this time, also, occurred the great hurricane described and deplored by Evelyn, which rooted up some four thousand of the finest old oaks. George III., who despised hunting, and had no eye to the wild beauties of the region, called it "a dreary waste." In 1851 the commissioners of woods cut down extensive tracts of the finest trees in order to plant dismal Scotch firs.

Stoden Ridge, on which alone they destroyed three hundred ancient yews, was said to have been the finest example of the natural forest to be seen in England in the middle of the present century; the largest of hollies and white beam were growing there, with here and there an ancient birch or hawthorn. Nowhere else were the trees so large, uniform, and grand in their stately growth of ages. Only eleven years ago (1880), another beautiful portion of New Forest was sacrificed in a similar manner: a fine beech wood was slaughtered, and the timber sold; a lovely stream that wound gracefully through the wood was straightened, and the surface roundabout planted to young firs, mechanically set in long straight lines, producing a melancholy and depressing effect.

Despite this cruel slashing, there is still left some fine forest scenery, where great trees stand sufficiently alone to show their complete form and perfect growth; we have had some of it to-day, and will have more to-morrow. As the ancient capital of the district,

around which are gathered many traditions of New Forest history, and also as the centre of one of its choicest parts, Lyndhurst is each summer haunted by tourists. Beaulieu (pronounced *Bewly*) Abbey, Netley Abbey, and Hurst Castle, all of them famous historic buildings, are not far away in the forest ; but its chief distinction lies in its rural beauty, and the rare blending of heather, lawns, and woodland.

There are, however, other charms : old-time relics abound ; its fine old trees are now rare treasures in England ; there are here numerous traces of prehistoric man ; in its shades may, it is said, be heard the note of almost every variety of English bird ; the forest has always been noted for deer ; I have already written of the wild ponies and hogs of to-day, and no doubt, judging from the fossils of tropical plants and animals found in great profusion, there was a time when herds of elephants pastured in this forest ; the tiger may have lurked in the deep jungles ; and over its heather-clad slopes the elk and the bison probably once ranged at will. England has had a strange history since these fossilized bones were laid to rest in the New Forest.

CHRISTCHURCH, *Hants*, *Saturday*, 13th. In Lyndhurst this morning the chief attraction proved to be the Queen's House, in one end of which is the Verderers' Hall. This rather insignificant royal residence, now occupied by the ranger, dates from the time of Charles II., and is supposed to have succeeded Castle Malwood as the seat of sylvan justice. Here Charles frequently kept his court, as did also George III. The house itself, of red-brick walls thick-clad with ivy, does not have the external appearance of being

over a century old ; but within, the projecting oak beams, blackened with age, and the quaint furniture and appointments, at once bespeak antiquity.

Within the Verderers' Hall are displayed many curious relics of forest customs. Here offenders against the laws of the forest were tried and sentenced. The inhabitants of royal forests were from early times ruled by special statutes of exceptional severity, designed to prevent poaching. It was, however, not until the reign of Henry I. that the forest code reached its maximum of cruelty. Under John, affairs were still at such a pass that it was considered "safer to be a beast than a Christian man."

It is impossible to say just when the elaborate forest laws ceased to be, with their cruel penalties, grievances almost insufferable, and in a mitigated form became only occasional nuisances. Among the many abuses credited to the unfortunate Charles I. was a sharp but brief revival of the then latent forest code, in order to obtain money without the aid of Parliament. That the spirit of the old jurisprudence lingered until the present century in the game laws of England is shown by Harriet Martineau, who in 1846 vigorously protested against the harshness used towards those poachers who were renters of small farmsteads near the great preserves, and on whose grain and vetches the hares and pheasants freely and often disastrously fed.

Of the hundred and forty square miles embraced in the New Forest at least one third is in private hands. The Queen is nominally the lady of the manor, and the Queen's House in Lyndhurst is styled a royal residence ; but the legal bounds of the crown



land are veiled in obscurity, and Parliament has taken all rights from her save that of keeping certain portions enclosed until young or newly planted trees are past danger from browsing. The only cutting now done is on a few tracts of pollarded growth and in thinning out old plantations; portable saw-mills work up the largest trunks into transportable timber, and the bark is carefully saved for sale to tanneries.

There was a long list of forest officers, in the good old times when a hungry man might be hanged for looking covetously on a deer: lord wardens, regarders, rangers, stewards, agistors, verderers, keepers, surveyors, woodwards, and riding foresters, — half of them titles that none but an antiquary can now tell the meaning of, so far are we removed from those halcyon days, although the chief among these offices remained as sinecures or “royal boons” long after there ceased to be any duties attaching to them.

The New Forest verderers were the magistrates of the forest courts of Swanimote, Attachment, and Regard. At the Swanimote, officers were enrolled and inquiries made into charges of grievance and oppression on their part; the Court of Attachment tried offences committed against and in the forest, with the power to attach the goods of culprits when they themselves could not be found; and the Court of Regard looked after homesteaders' dogs which were so mutilated in the feet that they could not track deer. Of all these ancient dignities only the Swanimote survives to-day in Verderers' Hall; and its chief business is the peaceful one of granting shooting, inn, and pasturage licenses, and collecting dues for the repair of roads. The verderers had held court

in the hall last Wednesday, with the same benches, tables, and chairs as were in use in this room hundreds of years ago ; and the official notices tacked on the walls were couched in the quaint phraseology of our far-away ancestors.

At a quarter past eleven we were on the road again, for a roundabout course of thirty-three miles to Christchurch, by way of Bolderwood Lodge, Brockenhurst, and Lymington. The day has been the hottest we have yet experienced in our tour ; and the road out to Bolderwood — seven miles — is up hill and down, white as a chalk-line, and dusty. In the open moors the heat and dust were sometimes stifling ; and for the occasional shaded avenues, where, under noble oaks, beeches, and firs we would stop for rest and a fresh breath, we were indeed grateful.

For the greater part of the way the underbrush — chiefly holly and may — is very thick ; but where the trees are exceptionally large and wide-spreading, with dense foliage, the ground is as bare of shrubbery as in an American pine forest. The great trunks and branches frequently hang with ragged festoons of gray moss, giving them a delightfully venerable appearance, and the ground is deep and soft also with moss, although beneath dry and parched from the drought which has been prevalent here this summer. Once or twice we crossed a meagre streamlet, with bitter water. New Forest is notable for its almost total lack of water, — a considerable drawback to the beauty of its landscapes.

Swan Green, just out of Lyndhurst, is one of the most charmingly situated hamlets in the district, but it is quite small ; around the green, which is well cov-

ered with bare trunks, — the local timber-yard, — are two smithies and a few heavily thatched cottages. A forester's hut is set here and there by the roadside, and, miles apart, the hunting-lodge of some man of wealth, but otherwise we see few human habitations, and there are not many ponies along the way. Our path is a lonely one, and we are the better able to appreciate the forest.

Bolderwood is a great woodland estate covering several square miles, all carefully set about with close palings, over which the protruding limbs of fir-trees almost sweep the ground. We had followed these for a mile or two, vainly seeking an opening through, when, at the corner of the tight fence, the highway debouched upon a bare common, where cows were grazing; and the road suddenly split into several paths, coursing off at widely separated angles over the open reaches of Bratley Plain.

Meeting a laborer, we were set right for Bolderwood gate, at no great distance under the trees, and given our bearings for Burley Lodge and Brockenhurst; the ordnance map is not sufficiently clear as to these private roads. At the keeper's lodge, a small brick house a hundred yards within the park, we obtained a jug of milk, and thoroughly enjoyed our lunch in a shady nook near by. The famous "King" and "Queen" oaks, back of the lodge, are visited annually by thousands of tourists, and well deserve the homage paid them as ancient monarchs of the forest.

The road to Burley, through Bolderwood estate, is rather rough for bicycling. For long stretches the sand is deep; frequently we found the way newly mended, and ever and anon it degenerates into a

mere cartpath. For miles together our wheels were in deep ruts, and the exercise of thus riding was rather tiring to the nerves. Tricycles could hardly have ventured here. It was a relief to have, every few miles, to get off and open a gate which barred our passage.

At Burley Lodge, where there are nothing more than a few keepers' cottages, we proceeded up a long sandy road, lined with rhododendrons and laburnums, into Mark Ash Wood, in which are some of the grandest trees in the region. Enormous trunks are met at every turn, and each new vista through the arching columns of the lonely forest seems more bewitching than the last. What sanctuaries these, for primitive worship! For the first time in our lives we appreciate the full strength and beauty of Bryant's "Forest Hymn," —

"The groves were God's first temples."

Three miles from Brockenhurst is a long, level stretch of old fir plantation, through which has been cut a broad avenue, like an extended cathedral nave hedged in with natural columns, and feathery branches arching overhead. To one side a keeper's cottage, with a garden of flowers and vegetables to front and rear, — a cheerful splash of color in this wilderness of shade. The man, his wife, and two bright children came out to the palings to see us, and we stopped to chat with them and drink from their deep, cool well behind the house. The little homestead, with its yellow thatch, the clambering roses in full bloom running up the walls, the variegated garden-patch, and the noble avenue converging

either way as straight as a die to far-distant points, formed a most charming picture of isolated forest life. We longed to settle down here for a day or two, to drink it all in, and took counsel together at the well-curb whether or not we should ask to be taken in. But our resolution, adopted at the outset, to linger nowhere beyond the stipulated time, was staring us in the face, and we hurried on out of temptation.

Soon our road emerged upon a gorse-covered moor with but occasional clumps of trees. Private estates began to appear, many of them with fine houses. A good down-grade brought us at last into Brockenhurst, — a rather smart and newish village on the river Lymington, which here sprawls through a dip in the sandy highway, and is fordable for carriages. We crossed over a shaky wooden foot-bridge, and ascending through the town, up past the old Saxon church and the green glades of Brockenhurst Park, took the broad white highway to the seaport of Lymington, seven miles away. To our right wooded downs dimpled the face of the country, and below us, to the left, spread expansive meadows by the river's side. Rural mansions were numerous, and blooded cattle grazing in rich pastures gave evidence of much wealth concentrated in these country-seats.

We only skim through the outskirts of Lymington, celebrated for its yacht-building yards, and a point of departure for the Isle of Wight. The shallow harbor is filled with shipping of the smaller sort, and there is a dry, intensely practical aspect to the place. Our road leads sharply to the right, a mile or two back from the coast. A cool breeze has sprung up,

as the evening creeps on apace. The glaring country street is carpeted with pulverized macadam, which has whitened the dense hedges on either side ; and miles ahead of us moving columns of dust tell of the passage of flocks and carts.

It is not an attractive way, — this dusty passage over the flats of Christchurch Bay, after two days in the romantic shades of the New Forest. Through gaps in the high hedges we catch glimpses of meadows on either side, with an occasional low ridge. Far away to the left, over intervening sea, the lofty dark-blue downs of the Isle of Wight — with chalk-roads over which we lately walked, and gleaming parallel lines of landslips, sharply accentuated — are outlined against the southern sky. Northward lies the dark, low mass of the New Forest, with jagged openings here and there, in which are set green fields, cattle browsing, and the pleasant rural homes of the aristocracy.

As the last light is fading from the long day, we enter Christchurch town. Wheeling through a crowd of Saturday-night idlers on the beautiful old stone bridge over the Avon, and past Norman castle ruins and a beautiful priory church, we are soon at our inn, right glad to be well housed at the close of a toilsome week.





CHAPTER IX.

ACROSS DORSET.

CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS, *Sunday, June 14.*
This ancient seaport was named from its large and interesting Norman priory church, "consecrated to the Saviour Christ." But while the oldest parts of the edifice now in view were built in the time of William Rufus, the foundations are of early Saxon origin, far older than the earliest records of the priory. The town itself was certainly Roman, and probably British.

Situated on a pleasant ridge, washed on either side by the Avon and the Stour, to the south lie long reaches of peaceful tidal meadows, in which the two rivers unite and flow into the sea at Christchurch Bay. Small fishing-smacks come in with the tide to just below the Avon bridge; but a thicket of masts, a mile or two off across the salt flats, shows where those of deeper draught are anchored.

The service in the fine old church this morning did not accord with the quaint beauty of its Norman and Early English architecture. It was a ceremony

devoid of life and warmth ; a Chinese prayer-machine could not be more mechanical. But there was an element of unconscious humor about the sermon which kept us awake. The preacher was a missionary rector from the Canadian Northwest. This was his thesis : During the construction of the Tower of Babel the Lord brought about the confusion of tongues to harass men for their wickedness ; but there is an implied promise in Scripture that in due time the peoples of the earth shall be reunited, — presumably with one language. Now, statistics prove that the English is fast gaining ground as the common language of Christendom ; at the present ratio it will not be long relatively before it is literally the one language of the world. This granted, then, England, which is the cradle and centre of the English-speaking race, is in due course to be the dominant nation of the world, — the one nation of the world. Now, as the Church of England is by divine ordination the one true Church of Englishmen, it is plain that she is the fold into which all mankind, forgetting differences of every sort, will at last be gathered. “Then, my beloved, how great the responsibility which rests upon us to-day, as the appointed guardians of the Divine Will ! Let us put the House of God in order that the end which He seeketh may be the sooner reached ! Let us forward His designs by extending our domain, and setting up avenues of approach to the oneness of God’s people, to the universality of His anointed Church !” And then the climax, — an appeal for aid in the work of bringing the people of Manitoba into the Anglican communion ! All of which was very ingenious, — I think

honestly so, on this missionary's part, — and gave us much quiet amusement.

After service we walked about the church. The choir is separated from the nave by a Perpendicular screen, — a fine piece of work of 1502. The nave, southwest aisle, and north transept still show some Norman work, with zigzag moulding, diamond network, chevrons, and other figures. In the chancel the ancient and curiously carved stalls for the canons remain for our admiration. A battlemented square tower of the fifteenth century rises at the west end; the clerestory is lofty; and a remarkable north porch of the fourteenth century is worthy of interest. Among the many sepulchral memorials, that which interested us most was to the poet Shelley, whose ashes lie in far-off Rome. Says Rabbe, in his "Shelley: The Man and the Poet": —

"This monument by Weeks, erected by filial piety in the shadow of a country church, to Shelley and Mary, awaits the hour when England shall atone for her ingratitude by placing it in Westminster Abbey by the side of the effigies of Milton, Spenser, and Shakespeare."

Lingering in the sombre shades of these storied walls until at last the jingle of the sexton's keys warned us that visitors must withdraw, we went out by the north porch, and there stumbled upon an interesting scene. It was the distribution of fifty-two loaves of bread to as many poor widows. Upon the basis of an ancient endowment this dole is meted out upon the second Sunday in each month, "and oftener if the weather be cold." The verger, severely dignified in his ecclesiastical gown, stood with

a tablet and pencil, and in the tone of an auctioneer called off in order the names of the beneficiaries, — "The Widow Cox!" "The Widow Lisle!" and so on through the list.

It was an eager crowd of faded women, old and young, which stood before this official dispenser of the staff of life, — in limp black bonnets, which showed traces of a dozen years of careful mending; in curious white caps, stiff with starch; in cheap plaid shawls with many a darn, and threadbare gowns of varied length and hue. There were the rotund, red-cheeked, self-satisfied, frowzy women, who stood with arms akimbo, and clearly looked upon this public receipt of alms at the church door as an amusing episode in life; there too were the lean, the haggard, the garrulous, with chin and nose fast meeting, their frail frames doubled over sticks and crutches, and snatching the dole with feverish eagerness; also the timid, shrinking lot, whose downcast eyes showed that to this parade of destitution nothing but sheer want had driven them. A singular assemblage this, of types for the cartoonist.

A warden, one of the little company of spectators within the porch, told me that there was a special loaf-giving at Christmas. He considered the monthly dole beneficial, because those who applied were in general needy; but that at Christmas-tide was more subject to abuse, and had a pauper-making tendency.

The exterior of this church of Norman times, which presents traces of every century since, is striking and dignified. A Norman turret, with arched panels and rope-work, is exceptionally fine; we have

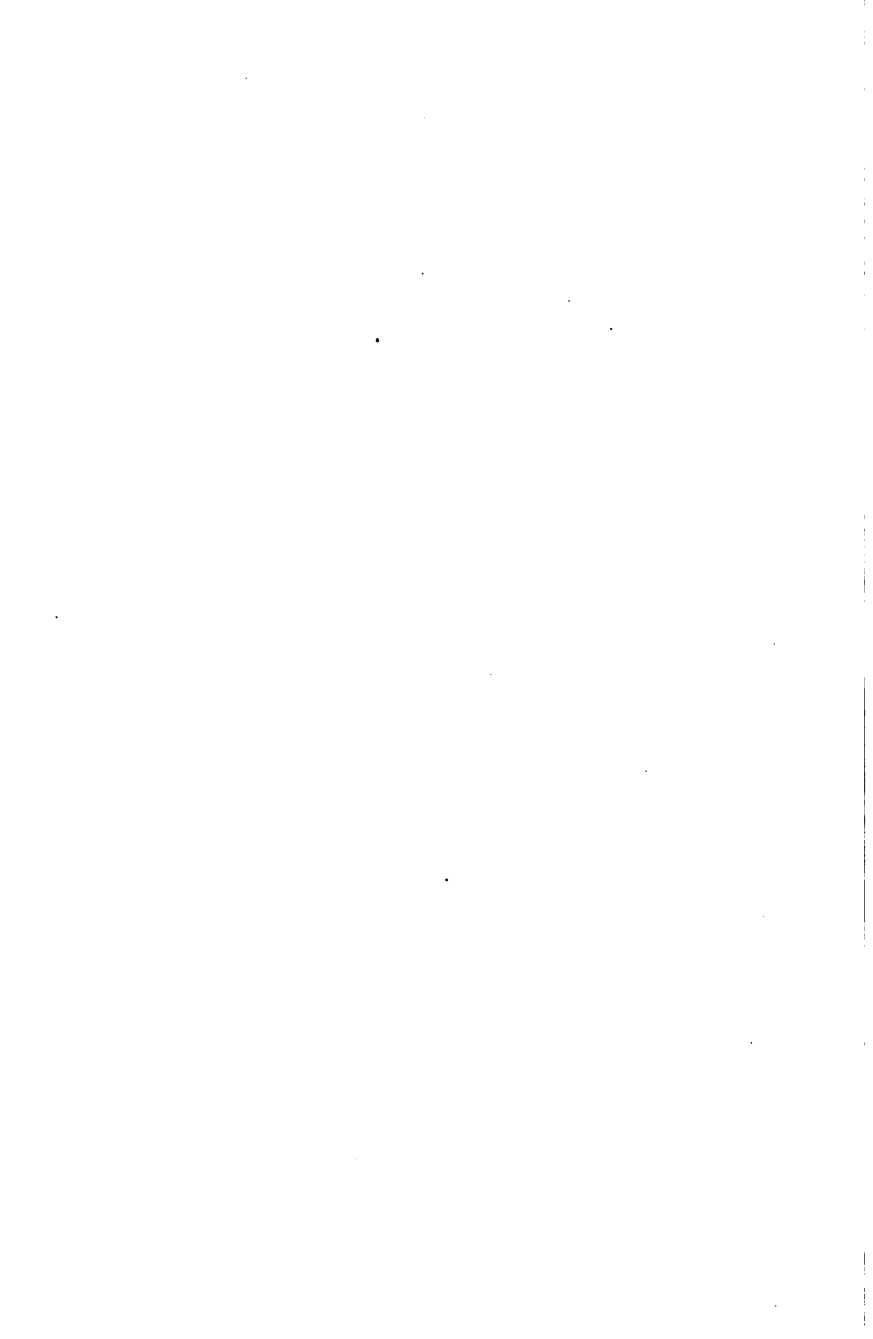
nowhere else seen anything like it. There are still in the grounds about some remains of the secular and conventual buildings of the ancient priory ; in an adjoining field are vestiges of fish-ponds ; a meadow hard by is still styled the "convent garden ;" and a walk, now used for recreation by the scholars of the church school, is to this day called "Paradise," and doubtless was once a monkish ambulatory. The Avon flows at the bottom of the priory grounds ; and in the protecting wall can still be seen outlines of a door through which the monks drew water from the peaceful stream.

Near by the churchyard are the ruins of a castle built here, some chroniclers say by Redvers, — a baron much favored and enriched by Henry I. Redvers walled the town in and held fierce sway for many years. Portions of the thick shell of his keep still remain on the summit of an artificial mound ; while below, and so situated by the Avon's bank that its inmates could haul up water from the river, are the remains of a stout stone hall, — locally called "Constable House," — now roofless and grown to ivy. This was possibly the baronial state apartment. It is loopholed for firing at close range, and in many ways speaks eloquently of those bloody times which it is our good fortune not to have been born in, when every man's hand was against his neighbor, and an Englishman's house must needs be a castle if he proposed to enjoy an independent existence.

DORCHESTER, DORSET, *Monday, 15th.* We were off from Christchurch this morning at ten o'clock. Following the Bournemouth highway westward for a mile and a half, we left it at the crossing of the Stour,



RURAL ENGLAND.



and took the angling by-road leading northwestward to Wimborne Minster, twelve miles distant.

The country is, with exceptions, fertile and highly cultivated. To our right, all the way, lie the meadows of the sluggish Stour. As we ascend the pleasant vale, we often come closely down to the water's brink, which is overhung with grasses and willows; but in general our path is along the undulating rim of the basin, threading the upland hedgerows. While passing easily over the lower swells, we have often to dismount and trudge up hills which it is not worth the effort to attempt to climb while still in the saddle.

Much may be done on our machines that we do not do, in the way of cycling gymnastics; but we are not professionals, neither are we breaking amateur records. We are out to see rural England by the best possible conveyance, and are taking our time at it. It is not at all times an easy conveyance to-day: this by-road to Wimborne is sandy and dusty, and for long stretches much cut up by the sharp hoofs of sheep, for thousands of them pass over it daily in changing pastures, so that the wheeling is not as good as on the great highways which we generally follow. It would not be well, however, to have our passage all plain sailing; there would be no variety in it. One is the better prepared to be joyful over a good street when he has had an indifferent one to travel. Besides, the worst here are magnificent compared with the average American country road; one is apt to get spoiled by these luxurious English turnpikes.

The little villages along our path present charming pictures of rural life, — Holdenhurst, Throop, Ems-

bury Green (near which we cross the border into Dorset), Red Hill, Kinson, Knighton, Canford Magna, characteristic south-country names, with an oldtime flavor about them. Red Hill is delightfully picturesque. We also fell quite in love with Kinson, where half the cottages in the double row flanking the one prolonged street are heavily thatched and numerous dormered. Canford Magna is on the broad and beautiful estate of Lord Wimborne. The village is a marvel of neatness and scenic effects; each cottage has its graceful rustic porch, and the gardens of tulips and wall-flowers give it a setting of exceeding grace. While the general aspect is one of studied quaintness, there are many new and model blocks of red-brick cottages, with my lord's arms neatly engraven over each doorway. Hard by is the great white mansion, whose occupants doubtless take great pride in preserving this hamlet of their working-folk as a thing of beauty. It is, however, rather too consciously artistic: it has a set, stagey appearance, an air of sitting for its picture; one fears that should a child with a soiled apron appear on the street my lord's landscape-gardener would call out the police.

It was twelve o'clock when we arrived at Wimborne Minster (twenty-five hundred inhabitants). The noon bells were pealing in the great lantern tower of the venerable collegiate church, and the streets were filled with working people hastening homeward from the woollen and hosiery factories which appear to constitute the chief industries of the place. It is a hard, unattractive town, though beautifully situated in one of the loveliest vales in England, and has fallen sadly from its ancient state.

There are marks here of Roman splendor ; in Saxon times it was a well-fortified and important place, the scene of numerous struggles between Eadward the Elder and Ethelwald. Its Saxon nunnery was one of the earliest on the island ; Ethelwald took his wife from its walls. The Danes destroyed the sacred house ; and Edward the Confessor converted it into a college of secular canons.

The church of this old nunnery of the eighth century is the principal attraction. We found it near the centre of the town, closely hemmed in with business buildings. Chaining our machines in a foot-path running alongside the churchyard, we entered through the iron gateway, and in the porch were met smilingly by a young verger whose chief care was to show us the interior restorations now in progress. These appear to be overdone, but perhaps it is unfair to judge of the effect until complete. Restoration is quite the fad over here, in churches high and low, big and little. It is seldom you can go inside of an English church and not find staring at you near the entrance a placard inviting — and sometimes piteously imploring — “ Offerings for the Restoration Fund.”

There is a curious mixture in this hoary pile of the Saxon and Gothic orders of architecture, — I know Freeman carefully explains that there is no such thing as Gothic architecture, but we have come almost universally to adopt the term, and it is a convenient adjective for a style fairly well defined. The form and general aspect is Saxon, yet there have been notable additions in the Norman, Early English, and Perpendicular methods, and thus the church is an interest-

ing study in architectural transitions. It would be well if it were better known to our country people.

An old Saxon chest hewn out of a solid log, like the "dug-out" canoe of the American Indian, is an interesting relic here. It has six locks, and until quite recent times the church deeds and other valuable papers were kept within it; each vestryman had a key, and all were obliged to be present and start the bolts before it could be opened. Several other strong boxes, of the Norman and Plantagenet eras, are also exhibited, each of them having numerous locks with different keys, which were held by various church officers. Relics these, of the days — not so far departed from us — when no man counted his neighbor honest, even in the administration of the church; of the days when men bartering in the market-place had each to clutch the other's goods before agreeing to release his own.

We saw also the brass effigy of King Æthelred the Unready, who lies buried in the sanctuary. If his Wessex Majesty looked at all like this alleged portrait, he must have been a most melancholy gentleman. But more interesting to us than Æthelred's tomb was the chained library, to which we climbed, up a dark, narrow flight of spiral stairs. In a tower chamber a dozen feet square, and badly lighted, is this library of two hundred and forty volumes, established in 1686 for the free use of the townsfolk by a gentleman named Stone. The books — ponderous tomes, mainly theological — are bound in pig-skin, and carefully chained to rings sliding freely on horizontal iron rods; a light portable reading-desk is so arranged that it can be easily moved from place to

place wherever needed. Stone wished the people to read his books, but he did not want them carried away. Nobody could be trusted in his day and generation, hence the chains. It is said that when this now probably unique library was opened, it was found that few in the parish had mastered the first of the R's ; the more gifted of the community were kept busy reading to their friends, who would, under certain rules of precedence, assemble in groups within the chamber. In a glass case in the centre of the room are a dozen or so rarities. The most notable are a vellum manuscript of 1384, a Breeches Bible, and an early edition of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy."

We lunched under a broad-spreading oak, overhanging the Stour at the bridge beyond Wimborne Minster. The broad green meadows roundabout were sprinkled with buttercups and daisies, and groups of cattle were resting under the tree-clumps, serenely chewing their noonday cud.

Leaving the Stour valley at Corfe Mullen, a few miles beyond, our path now lay over a succession of water-sheds to Dorchester by the way of Bere Regis, an afternoon run of twenty miles. Picturesque hamlets are Winterborne Zelstone and Winterborne Thompson, but Bere Regis is full of the savor of antiquity. There are few new dwellings here ; pretty much everything is as it might have been two or three centuries ago. It is a village where one could profitably study in detail the simplest types of the cottage class.

On the river Puddle (*alias* Trent), whose valley we now ascend for an hour or two, are numerous little villages worthy of prettier names, — Turner's

Puddle, Bryan's Puddle, Affpuddle, Tolpuddle, Puddletown, Puddlehinton, and Puddletrenthide. We passed through the most of them, and sign-boards pointed the way to others. It is plain that these names originated in early times by way of distinguishing the several settlements on the Puddle, and our map shows frequent cases of a similar fashion in neighborhood nomenclature ; but seldom is the result more grotesque than in this smiling vale.

The country grows more rugged as we progress. From the ridges and the breezy hill-tops we have wide views afield. The tones and lights are agreeably varied ; each hue and line is startlingly vivid in this clear atmosphere, — the deep-green meadows dotted dark with browsing herds, and yellow and white with flowers ; swelling downs gracefully capped with belts of fir ; abrupt hillsides with lusty beech-hangers ; slopes of moorland patched with dark, forbidding gorse ; fields of grain flashing in the sunlight ; and, often framing the picture, the delicate charm of forest lands.

Laborers in the hedged fields are busy ploughing and dragging. There is often a deal of smoke arising from their midst, emitted by little bonfires of couch-grass, — a weary pest in English farming. In the meadows groups of hay-makers, men and boys, appear to be having a jolly time over their sweet-smelling toil. Scythes are mostly in use, yet here and there an American mowing-machine is levelling grass and clover in broad swaths that put hand-workers to shame.

It is a smooth, broad highway we are now on, — an old coaching-road from Wimborne Minster to Dorchester. Carriers, with tandem teams of shaggy fet-

locked shire horses, are frequently met this afternoon, or are caught up with and swiftly passed. In the great wagons, so like arks, are all manner of commodities, — beer, coals, bags of fertilizers, bales of wool, grain.

The huge closed vans of furniture-movers are not infrequent. For a small country, there is a deal of flitting about over here. My lord and the squire move up to London for "the season," and then move down again, with the greatest ease imaginable; or they move across the island from one of their mansions to another, or over to the Continent, and think nothing of it. To be sure, the very wealthy have most things in duplicate at their various abiding-places, yet there are certain personal possessions that must follow them; and there are thousands less rich in goods who change about with all their household gods at their heels.

The furniture-movers have developed a system apparently perfect. Merely say the word, and the great vans come to your door with a corps of experts, who strip the house for you, snugly pack everything within these portable sheds, wheel them off to the nearest railway station, lift them from their low trucks and load them upon "goods vans," which they exactly fit, and there is your property ready for railway and steamship transport to any part of the United Kingdom or the Continent. At the terminal station, the mover's agents roll the box upon a highway truck again; it is wheeled to your new front door, and another lot of experts unpack and put everything in its place, — carpets on the floors, curtains on the windows, and china in the closet, with not a cup broken,

nor a drapery soiled. All you have to do is to move in and pay the bill. In this highly civilized land, if your money cannot purchase comfort, it can at least rid you of much discomfort.

On a noble down, before descending into the valley of the Frome, is Kingston House, a spreading mansion built in the time of George I. Over the open iron railing which fences the park we have lovely vistas under ancestral oaks, and from this eminence the views of the country-side are most agreeable. The hamlet of the estate servants is not far off. In the recreation-ground, screened from the highway by a high hedge, the villagers are having a game of cricket, — probably a match with some rival team from the Puddle country through which we have just been wheeling. Tents are pitched at one end of the carefully rolled field, flags are flying, refreshments are being served to a distinguished-looking company in camp-chairs, — doubtless gentry from the “big house.” It is a pretty gala scene as we look through the gate for a moment or two.

A fine spin it is, down the edge of the Frome's basin. A postman on a tricycle, bearing, deep-set between the wheels, a red box holding at least two bushels, thought to race with us, but we soon pulled past him, and he smilingly tipped his cap at parting. W—— thought his luggage-box a fine thing for gypsying, and, as we two coasted abreast, waxed eloquent over the edibles and appointments that could be packed into a two-bushel kitchen like that.

But we strike a head-wind in this trough, and W—— is carrying too much sail to withstand it. The last mile into Dorchester (eight thousand inhabitants)

is through rich meadows, over a beautiful stretch of road-bed as hard and level as a floor, yet we are forced to walk beside our wheels, and bid appetites be patient.

It proves, however, not altogether a disadvantage. The old town is on a ridge, rising sharply from the opposite bank. As it looms in stately outline against the roseate west, and evening shadows cast upon it a mystic spell, Dorchester bears an aspect most venerable. We think of its importance as a Roman camp; of its obstinate resistance to the Danes; of the bloody assizes held here after Monmouth's rebellion, before infamous Jeffries; of the important part played by Dorchester merchants in the settlement of Puritan New England; of Hardy's romances, which cluster about this old Wessex town, figuring in his tales as "Casterbridge." There is time to talk of these things and enjoy Dorchester in the twilight glow, so that we are glad we walked.

In the gathering gloom the river takes on a steel-blue tone as it swishes rapidly past the rocky base of Dorset's ancient county town. Crossing by a broad stone bridge, we ascend a lonely hillside street between gloomy buildings, and are soon at The King's Arms, where — wondrous in rural England! — we have our supper by electric light.

CHARMOUTH, *Dorset, Tuesday, 16th.* The museum in Dorchester contains a remarkable collection of antiquities, — one of the best in the country, outside of London. But while full of interest, it is badly kept and inartistically arranged. The neighborhood is a happy hunting-ground for archæologists. Besides scores of barrows, there are several large intrenched camps, — Poundbury and Maiden Castle being prob-

ably British, while Maumbury Rings is the best-preserved Roman amphitheatre on the island. All of these have responded liberally to the picks and spades of explorers.

It was after eleven when we left the hotel this morning. As we go westward into the hill country, bicycles are fewer ; and in Dorset a lady on a machine appears to be a rarity. There was a goodly crowd of curiosity-seekers at the street corners as we trundled off, — a silent, unobtrusive crowd, but quite as filled with wonder as though we were leaving town on flying-machines.

A long avenue of interlacing oaks brought us past the army barracks on the Bridport road. Two officers at the gate looked on with admiration, one of them saying in an undertone to the other, "That 's the way to go on a march !" Along the crest of the ridge our highway stretches out for a mile or two, straight, white, and dusty, with unhedged, undulating moorland on either side. Southward, the grassy hill-tops are covered with barrows and earth-rings of successive British and Roman occupations. We are in a storied land.

Leaving the ridgeway, we descend through a pasture, over a narrow cart-track, to a lower road winding around the base of Maiden Castle. As the bald down and its crowning rampart tower close above us, we seem in closer communion with the ancients, and rattle merrily down a stony way into the peaceful hamlet of Winterborne St. Martin. Here, by a purling brook harnessed to a tandem of water-wheels, is nestled one of the quietest and sunniest hamlets in all Dorset. To right, the stream, crossed frequently by little stone bridges, and flanked with grist-mills ; to left, a row of

thatched cottages and two or three solid farmhouses set in fine flower-gardens. In the morning the sun rises late over the castle mound, but in the afternoon St. Martin basks long in the full glory of daylight.

First on one side of the path, and then on the other, the busy bourne dances along below St. Martin's. Now and then it expands into a pool, resting quietly beneath a patchy white coat of water crow-foot, and plebeian ducks splash in and out with much commotion. School-children and laborers line the path which leads to dinner, and stop and gape as we pick our way slowly amid the flints which strew the surface of the by-road.

Winterborne Steepleton is such another village as St. Martin. At Winterborne Abbas we rejoin the Bridport coach-road. A quaint, far-away spot this Abbas. We fell in love with the post-office, — a low thatched cottage, which might have been the birth-place of Cromwell or almost any one else of his time, for apparently it has not changed these two or three hundred years. I photographed it, but sighed for the time when we shall have color in our Kodak views, not mere lifeless shadow. Around the old parish church the out-door tombs were once ostentatious, but now they are tumbled down and merely suggest their former state. I asked a bright-looking boy what river or brook it was whose little valley we had descended from the foot of Maiden Castle. "It bean't no river or brook, zur," he replied, plainly surprised at my ignorance; "it be only a spring, zur!"

Abbas is interesting as an archæological centre. A mile westward is a small "Druidical" circle of nine great stones, some of them seven feet high, the

diameter of the area being twenty-eight feet; and we were told of other standing stones within the circuit of a mile. Celtic barrows on the surrounding downs are even more numerous and varied in size and outline than on Salisbury Plain. Many have yielded rich specimens for the Dorchester Museum. Following a ridge just beyond Abbas, a Roman road crosses our highway at right angles and disappears over the edge, sharply defined, well-made, but now carpeted with sod, and part of a sheep-pasture.

Numerous streams have their heads in ravines corrugating the slopes of the narrow water-shed which we now traverse for some miles. There are pretty views down the little valleys, with wonderful greens and silvers and browns on lowland and upland. Below us are fine estates, with spreading mansions set among trees, deer feeding in the glades, and horses and men at work in curious little fields outlined by dark hedges. Great flocks of Dorset-downs, with crooked horns, nibble the rich herbage on gorse-strewn hills, which crowd closer and closer upon us as we progress, like billows in the sea.

We have lunch in the shadow of a hillside wood, the air melodious with the calls of wood-pigeons and cuckoos resting in the welcome shade. The thorny hedge-may is still decked in spots with white blossoms, but it is getting late in the season for this cheerful bloomer. Pink campion is frequent now, in pretty contrast with the dark-green background of the hedges, and the banks are speckled blue with dainty bird's-eye. As we pass by, palpitating rabbits dart from wayside holes and dash up the road in front of us, to disappear through the first opening into the

fields, where their ears and haunches go excitedly bobbing through the corn.

Even "the quality" have donkey-carts on these far-away rustic roads. We meet ladies and children packed into them, either merrily driving themselves, or with "Jeems," looking strangely out of place, as, in his coachman's buff and white, he poses on a box-seat three sizes too small for him. A sour old lady in a coffin-like Bath chair drawn by a donkey interests us. A boy walking alongside holds the sleepy animal by the bits, as though he were a dangerous beast; and his mistress carries a long whip, whether to lash the donkey or the lad I know not. I am afraid we smiled unconsciously, for the occupant glowered at us as we passed, as though we were an impertinent intrusion on the scene.

Longbredy Hill is a "topper" indeed. The sunlight is scorching, the white road dry, dazzling, dusty. I have both machines to push up the steep incline, and often stop for breath. But the panorama, as it slowly unrolls, is most superb. Billowy downs surround us, some marked by crowning clumps of firs, and here and there a line of trees climbing over the hill-tops, marking a cross-country road. Near and far, Celtic and Roman earthworks diaper the neighboring swells. The hillside fields of grass and grain and fallow are boldly marked out by hedges; and down in the dark-green creases of the land are laborers' cottages or little farmsteads, with bees, flowers, and orchards with young fruit.

It is a sharp coast down the other side of Longbredy. Through a cleft in the hills to the left, we have a marvellous view of the dancing sea, over the

tops of roadside cottages, and in the middle-ground the red-roofed hamlet of Puncknowle nestling at the foot of Beckon Hill. A magnificent rustic amphitheatre this.

Beyond us, the highway again ascends at a sharp angle, and there is another warm climb, rewarded at the top by a more expanded vista. Through gate-openings in the hedges which line this lofty road, we see the uneasy ocean flashing far and wide to the horizon, upon it graceful sails full-spread, and to the southwest the majestic headlands of Lyme Bay.

A dark basin in the downs holds the tiny hamlet of Askerswell, some two hundred feet below us to the right. There is a cluster of farm buildings and a cottage or two. Those Wessex folk down there are well sheltered from winter's storms, but they have a rare climb up the wooded acclivities to the surrounding hill-tops, if they would see what the outer world is like.

The downs are ridged and dimpled most curiously hereabouts; alternating fields and woods and pasture-land, sombre ravines and sunny slopes, white roads and dark-green hedge-rows streaking the country-side, present strange effects of color under the white and azure of the varied sky.

We have a three-mile spin down into Bridport (seven thousand inhabitants), on the river Brit. It is a fishing town, although the haven is a mile seaward; but more important than this industry is that of cordage manufacture, for which it has been noted from early times. In the reign of Henry VIII., all the cordage for the English navy was made within a circuit of five miles from Bridport. The town itself is chiefly huddled upon one long, wide, undulating

street, in which there are several good houses. To the right the mansion of the lord of the manor is, with its ample grounds, picturesquely prominent in the scene ; but there is little else in dry, dusty, matter-of-fact Bridport to interest searchers for the antique and the beautiful.

For the next four miles, in crossing the water-shed betwixt the valleys of the Brit and the Char, we had frightfully steep hills to compass. The worst of these is at Chidcock (pronounced *Chidduk*). It is as sharp a grade as a horse could clamber up. A head wind had now set in, blowing clouds of dust in our faces ; the sun was aggravatingly hot ; and while bending low to push the two machines, which seemed made of lead, I caught myself at times wondering why we had ventured among these abominable hills, and whether they continued thus all the way to Land's End.

But there are as many downhills as up in this life ; and when we took our final two-mile coast right into delightful Charmouth, on the bank of a noisy little torrent pouring into the sea just around the shoulder of the hill, we thought it well worth the effort to get here.

We are at The Coach and Horses, with a motherly landlady, and the comforts of an English inn of the olden time. The good dame has just brought to us the inevitable visitors' book, with its curious collection of prose and verse, comic and sentimental, original and "cribbed," scrawled there by a long line of preceding guests. It would be churlish not to add something, and one of us writes feelingly, —

" The hills are up, and the hills are down,
All on the way to Charmouth town ! "



CHAPTER X.

THE HILLS OF DEVON.

EXETER, *Wednesday, June 17.* Charmouth is supposed to be the Carixa of the Romans. It was already an ancient place in the ninth century, when two bloody contests were fought in this neighborhood between the Danes and the Saxons. It was at Charmouth that one of the party of Charles II. stopped to have his horse shod, when the king was attempting after the battle of Worcester to escape into France. The village blacksmith knew that the old shoes were set in the north, and sounded the alarm which nearly resulted in his Majesty's capture.

Quiet people go to Charmouth in these days because they can bathe there with less publicity than at Lyme Regis, — a popular seaside resort near by. After breakfast this morning we followed a shady lane to the shore, a half-mile distant. Two dingy bathing-machines were drawn up alongside an unpainted, battered shed, where fishing-boats are stored in winter. The broad, white beach lies smooth as a floor at the base of a recess in the bluish cliffs; two or three miles to the west, well up on the south-

ern slope of a down, are the roofs and spires of fashionable Lyme Regis.

Two fishermen were leisurely launching their yawl; life seemed easy with them this sunny day, though no doubt they have times of storm and stress which none but the stoutest can withstand. On a neighboring cliffside is the solitary white cabin of the coast-guard; one of the blue jackets is walking his beat, now scanning the sea with hand over eyes, and now raising his spy-glass to scrutinize some far-off speck upon the glistening waves; another, with a number of little flags, is going through the dumb show of signal practice. Meaningless tasks these, on such a bright June day, when sky and sea are placid; but no man can tell when this monotonous drill may be put in lively practice for the benefit of imperilled humanity, and it behooves the brave guardsmen to know their lesson well.

Bidding adieu to The Coach and Horses at half-past eleven, we headed for Axminster, and at once began the ascent of one of the steepest of Dorset hills. The climb lasted for two miles, with all its crooks and turnings. But fresh to our work, and regaled with fine retrospective views of the rugged valley of the Char, the vigorous exercise was not unwelcome. The road-makers took pity on the men and beasts, towards the last, and pierced a tunnel through the topmost peak.

Emerging from the westward end we had the most comprehensive panorama of hill and dale and sea yet met with. Heather blackens the open moorland in great patches; deep woodlands, in which cuckoos sound, darkly mantle many a swell; great

flocks of sheep are seen like splashes of white against grayish-green pastures ; yellow iris is in a tidal swamp far below us to the left. In the meadows along our ups and downs are buttercups and daisies ; and where hedges, rank and tall, flank the numerous lanes, there are pink campion and hosts of ferns, — hart's-tongue predominating.

Sometimes, from our lofty way, we can look right down into the gardens and on the roofs of little farmsteads. Men and boys are out haying in fields which pitch upward at an angle of forty degrees. Crude rakes are dragged by patient ponies, which seemingly have hard work to keep from rolling downhill. Behind them leap and crawl their masters, panting from the weary task. Once pausing by a break in the hedge, we sat on the bank and peered over at a bucolic scene beneath. Three men were unloading hay from a small cart. Being on an incline, the donkey was restive with his load, which frequently slipped back with him. There was a deal of whipping and shouting, no one apparently thinking to block the wheels ; and the ten minutes we watched them were spent with small result. A pebble at last loosened from our seat to go bounding down the declivity and fall in their midst. All three looked up at us savagely, doubtless thinking we had pelted them in mockery of their futile efforts at rick-building.

Hunter's Lodge Inn, where we cross the border into Devon, is a small wayside public. Two or three donkey-carts and a carrier's van were standing in front. Travellers get thirsty up in these toilsome hills ; and this public seems artfully placed to catch trade, on the edge of the steep basin of the river Axe.

Across the fields to the northeast occasionally come the swelling strains of a brass band, and now and then wild shouts. There is an old-fashioned rustic fair to-day over at Lambeth Castle, where on the top of a lofty hill a half-dozen miles away are extensive Roman ramparts. It is hard to pass this spectacle by, for fairs of the olden type are now few in England, but the report of the enormity of the climb thither induces us to husband strength and proceed on our way.

From the county line it is a lively descent for three miles into Axminster (three thousand inhabitants). We meet vans, omnibuses, carts, and wagons of all imaginable kinds laden with humanity, slowly struggling up the hill while we flit easily down. There are shouts and cheers and laughter as we pass them all, a waving of beribboned whips and hats and gaudy handkerchiefs. Axminster is having a trade holiday; and every one, master and servant, is going to Lambeth Castle fair.

As side by side we bowled down into the quaint, curious old town, through its narrow, crooked streets, we had at each fresh turn a charming bit: timbered houses that had survived from the days of Elizabeth and Anne; passing groups of townsfolk tricked out in Sunday best; ostlers in innyards busy furbishing their traps; old coaches that had been dragged out from the dust of generations to do duty on this great occasion, and were being rapidly filled at the tavern doors; a queer old drinking-fountain in the market-place; the bulky minster, patched with every architectural order since the reign of Æthelstan. It was all very picturesque. Town and people look, upon this

gala day, as though we had suddenly wheeled into the midst of the eighteenth century. The famous Axminster carpet, however, is no longer made in Axminster; the people do a little as cloth-makers and glovers, but the ancient manufacturing glory is no more.

Crossing the Axe, just without the town, we have, for a mile or two on our way to Honiton, a pleasant valley road through broad and fertile meadows. Numbers of black and white Devon cattle are grazing, and creameries are set by the wayside; rows of conical beehives of twisted straw stand on benches by the cottage doors, in the shade of rose-vines and laburnums. Literally this is a land of milk and honey.

Our way is undulating now, as gradually we climb to higher altitudes again. The hedge-rows streaking the country are gay with flowers, among which we detect some of the simpler orchids; and many of the hillside fields, with their wealth of buttercups, are as burnished. gold.

We have passed many quaint inns to-day that would tickle an artist's fancy. There are two at the dilapidated but interesting village of Wilminaton, on a long, easy hill-slope three or four miles east of Honiton. Perched at either end of the hamlet, each up a flight of stone steps, with side entrances, they are clearly of hundreds of years standing. A brawling brook, splashing over the stones, runs down through Wilminaton's street, under the deep shade of trees forming the boundary of a farmstead. There are, opposite the cottages, abundant dipping-places for filling pails and watering horses; and down below, the stream is halted in its scramble and made to turn the wheels of a small saw-mill.

From the next summit we had a down-grade of two miles into Honiton (four thousand inhabitants) ; but the way is steep and rough, and we found the plunge a severe strain on nerves and wrist muscles. An old, far-away, shabby sort of town, but prettily situated, is this seat of a once important lace-making industry. What lace is now made in the district is the product of the neighboring villages ; but the real Honiton of to-day never saw Honiton.

It is sixteen miles from here on to Exeter, — the county town of Devonshire. The highway leads across the valleys of the Otter and the Clist, — through Gittisham, Rockbeare, and Honiton Clist, insignificant villages in the midst of a prosperous and fairly level region of abundant orchards, and pastures wherein feed fine herds of cows and horses. At Rockbeare, in the yard of the National school, it was a pretty sight to see children noisily circling around a may-pole, quite in the olden style ; and at Honiton Clist, the teacher had her flock of little ones clustered about her in the deep shade of the churchyard yew.

After thirty-one miles of toilsome cycling in the blazing sun of the hottest day we have thus far met in England, it was with no small satisfaction that we at last trundled into the well-paved streets of Exeter (forty-seven thousand inhabitants) just in time to be the last guests at our chosen inn, for the city chances to be crowded to-day on account of the cattle-market.

EXETER, *Thursday, 18th.* We have had a grand day here, filled to the brim with sight-seeing, — Rougemont Castle, Albert Memorial Museum, the buildings of the county government, the Guildhall, and the Cathedral. There is a rare wealth of interesting

material in this "the one English city in which it is certain that human habitation has never ceased from the Roman period to the present day." We have done our duty by it all, in regulation tourist fashion. Page after page of my notebook is full; but when I come to-night to write up my journal, I find it all told so well in Murray and Baedeker that the notes have been laid aside; we will freshen up from the guide-books if, when we get home, any one asks us awkward questions involving dates or statistics.

We will never need Baedeker or Murray, however, to remind us that we have found Exeter a delicious dream of antiquities, — such buildings, such alleys, such courts, such quaint effects on every hand! The ancient city is so full of the savor of the olden time that we seem to be walking about in the midst of an historical pageant gotten up for the especial benefit of American tourists.

MORETON-HAMPSTEAD, *Friday, 19th.* The cattle-market was in full swing at Exeter this morning. We got off at half-past eleven, wheeling through busy High and Fore streets, to the Exe bridge, which crosses over into the suburb of St. Martin's.

These Devon folk seem never before to have seen a lady on a bicycle. There was a deal of curiosity over in Dorset over W——'s mount, but here it has developed into positive amazement. Everywhere we go we see advertisements of cycles posted on the dead walls and in the railway stations, and among them pictures of "ladies' safeties," with ladies riding them; yet the appearance of a lady actually on one of the new-fangled machines creates a genuine sensation in steady-going Wessex. At first we were exceedingly

annoyed, and half inclined to abandon the trip to save being stared at ; but on finding that the popular attitude was simply that of pleasant curiosity over a novelty, and had in it no element of rudeness, we concluded to carry out our plans, with the result that soon annoyance gave place to amusement. We have much quiet fun over the matter, W—— and I, and wonder why we had not thought to contract with some of those enterprising soap and cocoa manufacturers, whose enamelled-iron signs fairly plaster England, to attach their advertisements to our much-gazed-at wheels. It would have been a profitable venture for the advertisers, and of material assistance to our exchequer. The Queen, I assure W——, could not have had much more attention paid her in these western hills.

The banks of the river Exe are hereabout crowded with dingy factories, and the stream is a muddy sewer. We paused on the bridge to take a photographic shot at the cattle-market, getting a good bird's-eye view. The bustle on the bridge is ordinarily great ; as we prepare to wheel off into poverty-stricken St. Martin's, curiosity to see us occasions a veritable blockade of the western approach which requires the aid of two policemen to straighten out.

Safely off at last, with the gaping town crowd out of sight around the corner, we pass rapidly through the dingy suburb, and heading southwest to Moreton-Hampstead, on the edge of Dartmoor Forest, are soon mounting a long, dusty hill-road on the western rim of the Exe's basin. The day is the warmest yet. Shut in between the tall walls and close-grown hedges which line our upward path, the

pulverized macadam rising in clouds about us after each passing vehicle, we oftentimes struggle for breath, and come to agree that there are drawbacks in cycling amid these interminable hills of Devon during a hot wave.

An occasional whiff of air is obtainable on the summits, along the ridges, and through gate-openings in the hedges; but the heat has been oppressive all day, and our down-grades often spoiled by new metalling, as yet unrolled. The country grows wilder, and more tumbled and unkempt, as we approach Dartmoor, and the art of road-making is not so highly developed as in the eastern counties.

At the top of our first hill we rested on a high bank by the roadside in the shade of a clump of firs, enjoying in detail the broad panorama of the valley of the Exe. In the middle-ground the transeptal towers of Exeter Cathedral rise massively above a setting of trees; and all roundabout is an undulating sea of red-tiled roofs. Stretched far beyond, on hill and plain, lies a deep-green mantle of interlacing forest branches, pierced here and there by the gray tower of a parish church, — Exminster, Topsham, St. David's, and Upton Pynes.

There came along the highway towards the city a tall, scrawny man, with bad teeth, a spotless white shirt adorned with a gilt stud, and a paper collar guiltless of necktie. What he said to me, as he paused to look us over and examine our machines, which rested against the foot of the bank, I could not at first make out. It was the first time we had heard the peculiar dialect of the Dartmoor, and our friend good-naturedly repeated his remark several

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times at my request, before I came to understand it as "Hev yous brik deown?"

He stopped a quarter of an hour to chat with us, but all the time stood deferentially, unheeding our invitation to be seated. After a few phrases I caught his tricks of speech, and could follow him readily as he freely gossiped about his little world. A small farmer, living a mile or two back in the hills, he was on his way to the Exeter market. "A smart cattle-market" was Exeter, he said; "wi' a good bit o' buyers deown from t' midland ceounties." In the midlands, he explained, the ground in the winter is often much under water, and farmers do not succeed in wintering stock; so in the spring they purchase cattle in Devon, where the soil is thin, and fatten them on their own good summer grass-lands. "In Lonnun, zur, there is good sweep o' folk 'arnin' money the plinty, and" — with a knowing air — "spindin' all theys can gets too, zur!" This is the reason, he said, why all the best cattle eventually go up to London.

I asked him about the neighboring country, but his geographical knowledge was limited. Moreton, where we were going, was but twelve miles away. He was surprised when I asked him if he had been there, or to Tavistock, twenty-five miles farther west. Not he! Moreton was a "goodish-sized village, and Tavistock, too; so they says as has bin thet way." He had never been east of Exeter, nor farther west than Long Down End, a few miles out on our path, — "allus in these parts, zur; it takes heap sight o' crowns to travel, it do, zur! But I do remember, zur, as I was oncet in Shillingford, jest over t' 'ill, zur;

you 'll zee it an' you git on a bit." I recommended him to get a bicycle, and go around the country independently; but he declared he would never care to learn, it would be hard work. He inquired the price of a machine like mine, and whistled as he glanced at it again, possibly to see if it was gold-plated. "But, zur, thee couldst get a 'orse an' trap for thet, zur, and then you'd *hev* somethin'!"

Yankees are not the only inquisitive people on earth. He wanted to know whence we came. I replied, from Canterbury. "How far might thet be?" His eyes opened wide when told it was three hundred miles away. "My! but thet's a long distance, thet! A' deed n't know the country were so big as all thet!" And yet this man was no duldard, simply a commonplace peasant farmer, doubtless shrewd enough in handling midland-county cattle-buyers, but with an environment exceptionally narrow, and knowing nothing of the world beyond Dartmoor and the Exe. Let him emigrate to America, and brush up his wits a bit, and he might creditably represent his "deestrik" in the Legislature. I have seen worse timber in our ship of State.

Just as the may is getting out of blossom, the heather is coming in. The tangled moors are blushing with its delicate purple bloom. The roads are often cut deep through red sandstone and red clay; and here and there are great out-croppings of weather-stained rock, gray with moss and lichens. These landscape tints — the reds, the purples, the grays, the forest browns and greens, and the verdant meadows — are all in exquisite harmony with the deep blue overhead. By the roadside are orchids, butter-

cups, and fox-gloves, while ox-eye daisies spangle the fields.

Long Down End is a hillside cluster of four or five stone cottages, bedaubed with whitewash. Rude, forbidding structures these, glaringly white in the fierce heat of midday. One of the group is a shop and post-office; opposite is a farmhouse of the poorer sort; and the others are laborers' dwellings, beside which dirty children and mangy curs crouch listlessly in the narrow strip of shade.

The entrance to the farmhouse was through a pig-yard. Upon making known our wish for milk, we were shown by a toothless dame into the most uninviting dairy I ever laid eyes upon. It was cool, or we should not have accepted the invitation to eat our lunch there. The farm-wife, slightly daft, we thought, and deaf as a post, stood by our side chattering incoherently about pigs, chickens, and dairy interests, until we were glad at last to be rid of her and get under way again.

Up hill and down we slowly progressed. Forest and copse carpet the undulating earth, with here and there open meadows and small fields. Sheep and cattle are occasionally seen, but they apparently are not so numerous as to the east of the Exe. We pass, now and then, the gate and lodge of some country estate, and sometimes see the mansion itself perched up on a hillside, darkly framed by timber-growth, closing a charming forest vista. On the highway are carriers and farm carters, and men and women in smart pony traps, all hands dismounting at the foot of each hill, for Englishmen are merciful to their beasts.

Two thirds out, towards Moreton, is the river Teign (pronounced *Teen*), deep down in a charming vale. The wooded hills slope sharply up from a narrow meadow, through which the stream comes tumbling down in pretty cascades. Our pathway leads up this river for several miles to gain the highlands towards Doccombe. No spot in the Devon hills can be more delightful than this isolated dale.

In one especially fascinating spot, where the river runs upon a comparatively level stretch for two or three hundred yards, it is employed to turn the grindstone of a lonely blacksmith's shop. Hard by is the smith's cottage. While W—— was treating a group of his children to sweets, I entered the shop and engaged the master in conversation.

"Fine hills, these!"

"I ne'er look at t' 'ills, zur!" he responded rather gloomily.

"Too busy, I suppose?"

"Oh, no, zur, it bean't thet, zur; but w'en I 'se not workin', I 've plenty else to do then be lookin' at 'ills."

The grimy Devon mountaineer seemed personally affronted at the presence of the hills, and I soon discovered the nature of the offence: they shut him out from the world, and a chance to spread in his business. He was as a caged bird ambitious to fly. In America, this restive spirit would have moved to a more congenial locality; but he had inherited a niche here, and every other niche in England was filled,—there was no place for him elsewhere. It is difficult for an American, able to select from an abundance of pastures new, to realize that a man

may feel he is a prisoner to the conditions in which he was born ; but we may come to something like it when our land is as densely populated as this.

At Dunsford, a mile or so farther up the vale, is New Bridge,—a handsome stone crossing with several spans, dating from 1816. The Teign, a few yards wide, is here a series of delightful cascades, and the neighborhood a rich sketching-ground for artists. There is a small inn just off the road, down some rustic steps, and a gay party were having tea under a broad beech which shadows the door. Their carriage stood some distance off ; they must have driven out to this beauty-spot from Moreton or Exeter.

As we creep up among the hills, the stream now swiftly winds and flashes in the green meadows far below us, and now bounds and booms amid bowlders by the roadside. At last the river is permanently left in its margins of greenery, as we zigzag up the long water-shed to the south. Above us sharply rise slopes of reddish granite, here and there denuded of vegetation or purplish with heather, but generally grown thick to copse, which was now being cut at many points, the wonder being how the woodsmen stand to their task upon such steep inclines. Occasionally the highest hill-tops — or “ tors ” — of the region display granite bowlders so delicately poised upon their summits it seems as though a human hand might set them rolling and crashing into the dark abysses. Numberless springs trickle through roots and vines overhanging our hedgeless mountain path ; hart's-tongue fern luxuriates in shaded nooks ; and blocks of pink and white and yellow flowers, many of them new to us, diaper the banks.

Now and then a crude farmstead is seen climbing a neighboring hillside, — whitewashed stone cabins, huddled closely together, the farmer's front door often opening into the barnyard. Farmhouses in Devon are, as a rule, far less attractive than elsewhere on our route ; men and beasts are in too close proximity for the senses of the fastidious. Here and there is a fine estate, but the small holdings nearly all have rude buildings, of which the surrounding stone is the chief material ; even the chimneys and the sheds are of solid granite, and thatch is almost universal. There is every indication of a harsh struggle for existence in these rocky fastnesses ; and frequent storms doubtless drive mountaineers to crowd close to their winter tasks. Stone walls now often take the place of hedges, and the gate-posts are mortised slabs stood on end. The roadway is rough, doubtless never seeing a steam-roller ; and we go bumping painfully along amid inspiring scenes.

The sun had just slipped behind the lofty summit of Mardon Down, and Nature was hushed in deepening shadows, when we came up with a farmer bending over a pasture gate, and, pipe in mouth, listlessly gazing at his flock of sheep. He was a rough, good-natured, coatless fellow, with an intelligent gleam in his eyes, and fiery red beard and hair. Turning round at my greeting, and leaning against the bars, he crossed his legs, thrust his thumbs in the arm-holes of his unbuttoned waistcoat, and seemed anxious for a chat.

It was not often, he said, that he met travellers out this way, excepting in the shooting, when the swells came down to have a crack at the grouse ; there

were n't many deer left on the moor, these days. As for himself, he had been out a bit into the world. He had been in the midland counties, and in Liverpool, in his time, and had seen a thing or two of life ; but he had returned to Devon because it was the land of his birth, and there was more freedom up here in the hills than in the great towns. Still, the soil was too thin for profitable agriculture ; it was good for sheep, though, being dry underfoot. The hills were grand, no doubt, but they grew very monotonous to people living among them all the time. It was hard work getting round, and one could n't be very neighborly. He lived on a freehold that was handed down to him, but he often wished it were on the plain.

He pointed out one of his flocks over on the slope of Mardon Down ; it looked like a clump of white stones against the dark heather. We could see his home, — a cluster of whitewashed stone buildings nestled on a hillside half a mile away to the right, very picturesque in its isolation. A deep valley intervened, through which, half hidden by the trees, a mountain stream noisily tore its way, half choked with bowlders. A rough bridge of unhewn stone spanned the torrent, and a footpath zigzagged up through the brush and copse to the barnyard gate. It was a pretty scene for a painter ; but we agreed with the farmer that his home was altogether too difficult of approach for every-day life.

To the left of our road was an ancient hanger of beech and elm, weird enough in the fading light. A Roman road had once penetrated this bit of primeval woodland, but it had now degenerated into a cart-track, choked with a wondrous undergrowth of many

sorts. Round about were strewn granite boulders that had slid down from some unseen hill beyond ; half buried in moss were these sprawling stones, and embowered deep with ferns and ivy.

At Doccombe, just beyond in a dip between two sharp grades, we paused awhile to talk, in the cool evening, with a party of laborers and their wives going out with bills and mattocks to work in a stony allotment field. Not far on was more open country, with estates again, and rude wayside hedges of mingled may, hazel, and scrub-oak.

At last, after toiling on a long ascent, we were rewarded at the top by seeing spread before us a rolling vale, dark-green with woods, where a parish church-spire rising above the tree-tops showed the whereabouts of Moreton-Hampstead (two thousand inhabitants). It is several miles down to the village, over a winding road which is often so closely terraced that a tumble would have pitched us over the bank to a lower reach. There were charming views of the valley, changing at every turn, and the twilight tones and lights were most exquisite.

The village brass band was practising in the street as we bowled past the old church and almshouse, between the white and cream washed walls of stone cottages, and into the little market-square. The landlady at The White Hart, in the same breath that bore our welcome, proudly bade us hearken unto the band ; it had much improved of late, and Tavistock had n't any at all ! The would-be musicians stood in a circle without the coffee-room window while we sat at supper, — doubtless the landlady's treat ; and as they blew, in our hearts we congratulated Tavistock.



CHAPTER XI.

FROM DARTMOOR TO THE SEA.

NORTH TAWTON, *Saturday, June 20.* We discussed the situation pretty thoroughly last night at Moreton-Hampstead. It had been our intention to go on to Land's End, seventy-five miles farther to the southwest. But the hot weather and the steepness of the hills combined to change our plan; so we resolved to strike out northward to Bristol Channel and then work east again by the way of Bath and Oxford. Mountaineering on cycles in such weather is hard work, and we are out for pleasure.

There is much of interest at Moreton. It is a favorite point of departure for the depths of Dartmoor Forest, whose wooded hills lie stretched out forbiddingly on the western horizon, though Tavistock is the chief stopping-place for tourists. On the summit of a graceful swell is the parish church. Just without the churchyard is a field several acres in extent, a part of the ancient glebe, and once a sanctuary, or consecrated field, where criminals could claim the protection of holy church; it is now the public recreation-ground. There is a seventeenth-century alms-

house in the village street, built in a Spanish style, with a picturesque arcade running along the front. Not far away, in the midst of a widening of the road, — as though the newer cottages had courteously gone around the old trunk, rather than force it to be cut down, — is a giant elm with gnarled and broken limbs, a mass of sprouting greenery in this avenue of ugly lime-wash. There are the remnants of an ancient stone cross at the base, and the story goes that in olden times, on certain festal days, a dancing-platform was erected in the stout branches, for the merry lads and lasses of Moreton-Hampstead. The woman who keeps the stationery shop, and sold us photographs of the region, said her family came here two hundred years ago this summer, and had kept this self-same shop for a century. Her grandfather's diary, which she ran across the other day, spoke of his dancing in the old village elm.

It was so warm to-day that we stopped in Moreton till three in the afternoon, wanderingly leisurely about the place. Having given up Tavistock, we felt an interest in seeing the daily coach depart thither from The White Hart. It had but two passengers, a rural bridal couple on their honeymoon journey. The Dartmoor "tourist season" has not yet opened. In fact, we seem to be ahead of the tourists everywhere. The season here is not much over six weeks long, in July and August. No wonder the landlords at the popular resorts seem in a hurry to fleece their patrons, the opportunity to do it is so brief.

Starting from Moreton, as the afternoon shadows were lengthening, we knew not where we should pass the night. Whether to descend to the sea by the

valley of the Torridge or the valley of the Taw was an open question which the fortunes of the road must determine ; the parting of the ways was near Merry-meet Inn, some eight miles out. If the former route were chosen, Okehampton, with its ancient Norman castle, was our goal ; if the latter, it was to be the market-town of North Tawton, unless we could make Chulmleigh.

The highway this afternoon was woefully stony, and filled with exasperating bump-holes, while patches of fresh metalling caused us frequently to dismount even on the best of grades. While there were many steep climbs, perhaps two thirds of our short journey was downhill, and altogether we rejoiced that we were not dragging our weary bones over the mountains of the forest towards Tavistock.

Easton, two miles out, is a poor little village of laborers' cottages, — not such vine-embowered cottages, set in bright gardens, as we have met in the east, but crude whitewashed boxes of stone, set close upon the roadway, cheerless and poverty-stricken, the front doors swarming with children, pigs, and fowls. Life among the lowly, here on Dartmoor, is not attractive.

A few miles beyond the ancient seat of Shilstone House — a considerable estate — we met a flock of unattended sheep skurrying down the road, and had something of difficulty in getting through the bewildered throng. A few minutes later, shepherd himself, red-faced and dusty, came hurrying after his wards, excitedly garrulous in his inquiries as to their whereabouts.

Later, we paused for a drink at an old toll-house guarding the forks of the turnpike, where it was es-

sential at last to choose our route, north or north-west. The whitewashed cottage is no longer needed for a toll-gatherer now that the highway is free. It is occupied by an old peasant woman, hard-featured, but of kindly manner, who, in the roughest Dartmoor dialect, enlarged on the merits of her deep well, from which she drew for us a cooling potion. She had no words, however, too bitter for "narsty shepherd," who had "stopped f' summat o' drink at t' ain yender" — pointing towards Whiddon Down, a quarter of a mile northward — and let his flock get into her garden. The fellow was doubtless fresh from a tongue-lashing when we met him. Our hostess — short-skirted, her blue-stockinged feet thrust into capacious carpet-slippers, a white widow's cap well back on her head, and her great brown hands clasped beneath a blue jean apron — had evidently had experience with the evils of drink in her own household, for she was fairly beside herself in denouncing the Whiddon "ain" and all its frequenters, vowing that a cup of water from her own good well was worth a barrel of their "wretched speerits," and, moreover, hurt nobody.

It took little encouragement to induce her to prattle on, in quaint speech, over her homely affairs. She paid rent of seventeen dollars and a half a year for her little cottage and the few square rods of garden back of it; there were some chickens and a pig to help out, and stray pennies from thirsty travellers who knew of the deep well, yet it was hard picking against rent-day, though the good God had thus far kept her from the workhouse, — which would n't be for long, though, and she getting on past seventy.

This good woman at the cross-road thought the way smoother towards North Tawton than towards Okehampton, although she had travelled neither, and so we bent northward. Soon we saw the much-abused "ain" at Whiddon Down. There is a blacksmith's shop under the same roof, and near by a house and a laborer's cottage. Just as I had taken a snapshot of the little hamlet, a queer old man, clean-shaven, and in rusty corduroy, came hurrying towards us from the inn door, inquiring, "Be yous tekin' a likeness o' our willage?" On being assured that the village had just had its likeness taken, he expressed surprise at the ease and rapidity of the operation, saying a "paint artist" last summer had spent an half-day in "pictur'n' ol' ain;" but the world was full of new-fangled things, he had heard tell, and had I done it by electricity?

On the bald western slope of lofty Lang Down, is a collection of isolated gray stone buildings, — the Board school, with a house for the teacher and another for the laborer, whose wife is care-taker. There are few dwellings in sight from this elevated perch; and of the pleasant-faced janitor who came to the wall of the schoolyard to see us, we asked where the scholars came from. The dialect of this young working-woman was perfect of its kind, and her enunciation being better than that of our toll-house friend, we more readily noted the peculiarities of her speech. For the school-mistress, who had long lived in the house adjoining, but had just thrown up her office and left for New Zealand, our informant had but one pronoun, — "her," — which she handled volubly, sometimes with amusing effect. "'Er grew tired, 'er deed, wi' 'er goin's

and comin's, m'am, all 'er long years on 'er 'ill; an' 'er says, an' says, an' says, as 'er is goin'. An' fust I knew, 'er bags an' boxes 'er is packin' off New Zealand ways; an' 'er sail yesserday by 'er big sheep, 'er do; an' 'er's good 'oman as if ever was, an' I knows it!" There were thirty children at the school, said this good gossip, with an average attendance of twenty. They came from farmhouses roundabout, some of them as far as two miles away. I pitied them their daily climb.

We might better have gone west from the toll-house for a few miles, and taken the road paralleling this, down the valley of the Taw branch. As it was, being misdirected by the mistress of the well, we were obliged to cross numerous water-sheds of minor streamlets emptying into that river, by a poor, dusty path cut through red sandstone and clay. Farm-buildings passed on our way were of the cheerless pattern of blank, whitewashed walls, so familiar to us the past few days, with barnyards between the house door and the street. Children along the roadside were unkempt, and their thick dialect often difficult to comprehend. The few bridges were crude affairs of stone and mud, without the artistic proportions elsewhere met with.

The Southwestern railway station is in a valley a mile or so south of North Tawton. It is a hard climb to the top of the hill, on whose northern slope lies the sleepy village. A party of laborers returning homeward from the day's toil rest at the summit, awaiting our approach, and look on with stolid surprise while we mount for our downward spin through the double line of white cottages. The word seems somehow to

have been passed ahead, for as we bowl along in the narrow, stony street, every half-door and window is crowded with the heads of villagers to see us on our way.

"Oi tell yous!"

"My! 'oman! But thet 's ut!"

"See 'er! but 'er keep up wi' 'er man a' right!"

We hear this running fire of comment, in undertone from door to door, all down the village street to The Gostwicke Arms. I assure W—— she is the envy of her sex and the admiration of every man in North Tawton, but she persists in saying her preference is for less demonstrative tokens of regard.

Moreton is not alone with her village band. North Tawton's musicians paraded the street while we supped, — a motley but intensely serious procession, tailed by the little village shoemaker with the bass drum. When not pounding the calf-skin, he beat time in the air with his wadded baton, wagging his frowzy red head in solemn unison.

The Gostwicke Arms, which has been kept up as a tavern these three hundred years, stands on the triangular market-place. Across the way is the market-house, a forbidding two-story structure of blackish stone, with an open grass-grown court below, fenced in by iron gates. In the midst of the street is a cheap, red-brick clock-tower, with a wretched attempt at Gothic ornamentation in wood, and at the base seats for idlers, — the inevitable "Jubilee Memorial."

A steep, narrow lane, between the dark market-house and a glaring white cottage, leads up to the churchyard and the church. It is seldom one sees a

sanctuary here that is not ancient. England appears several centuries ago to have been sufficiently supplied with churches for all time to come. The congregations are often small enough now ; but our ancestors were more outwardly devout. This North Tawton church has a stuccoed tower, apparently Saxon, crowned by a curious little steeple. Its clock has but one face, and that looks towards the village, while on the opposite side is set an old sun-dial. An octagonal pillar of stone stands by the gravel path near the west door ; it is the sole relic of a mediæval market-cross, which long did duty on the site of the present jubilee memorial. Judging by the broad streak of rust down one side, it was used in its latter days as a lamp-post, like the one we saw at Downton, on the confines of New Forest.

North Tawton is a village of, say, three thousand inhabitants. A Yorkshire firm has, at the base of the hill, a woollen factory, employing two hundred hands. We sauntered down towards their quarter in the twilight of this long day. There are a few fashionable houses on the way, but the greater part of the buildings are the cottages and dwellings of workmen and tradespeople, and the general effect is dreary.

A Salvation Army officer was haranguing the almost empty street in a loud, cracked voice. Here and there was a head out of a window or half-door, and there were perhaps a half-dozen men lounging around in the neighborhood, in addition to the two in red blouses who supported the orator. Soon the latter fell back exhausted, and one of his comrades took up the tale. The rude dialect of Dartmoor sounded strangely harsh in these hoarse throats ; and it was

with difficulty we could follow the preaching, which was in the familiar, fervid style of the disciples of "blood and fire."

A working-man stood near us under a tree, sucking an antiquated pipe, and looking on with an expression in which disgust and amusement were equally mingled. "Rum uns, they!" said he, turning to me; "a' 'at's lift o' t' h'army, zur. Druv nearly a' thim ou' town, zur; but can't git rid o' a' thim, zur, an' more 's th' pity!" At last the speaking ceased, and one of the trio started a doleful hymn, while his comrades, with hats in hand, started on a collecting tour among the listeners at door and window. Our neighbor quickly drew away at the approach of a tithe-gatherer, saying he "'ad n't no use for 'allelujah nonsense," and lifting his grimy cap, bade us good-night.

NORTH TAWTON, *Sunday, 21st.* Armed with Prayer-Books and hymnals, lent us by the stately landlady, who after breakfast made us a formal call for the purpose, we went over to morning service at the parish church. The parson, a tall, dignified, kindly gentleman of middle life, entered the yard by the lych-gate and walked up the gravel path, arrayed in silk hat and cassock, with his women-folk about him, all bowing sweetly to the parishioners, right and left.

The pews are of the high-backed fashion, those next to the walls facing the centre. The organ is in the tower, over the entrance. In front of it was ranged a double mixed quartette, the young men and women being in their Sunday best, and much inclined to giggle and make sport behind the rail-curtains when not themselves taking part in the programme.

In the sloping galleries on either side of the organ, were the boys and girls of the parish, — boys to the left, girls to the right. The small boys were more restive than the choir; and here and there, perched in state upon the walls of the pews, were larger boys, who served as monitors, and seemed to have their hands full. Under the gallery, in a sort of amphitheatre, were crowded little children, kept in order by the Sunday-school teachers, — intelligent-looking young women, smartly attired. It must have been some sort of seating arrangement like this that our Puritan fathers carried over with them to New England, for we read continually in the church annals of the day of the difficulty of maintaining decent order among “ye ungodly boys in ye gallerie.” The singing was simple and of fair character; and the same may be said of the sermon, — all very Low Church, except the changing of vestments. During the opening offices the clergyman wore a fur-fringed doctor’s hood and surplice; but just before the sermon the sexton relieved him of both, leaving him to preach in his cassock, worn beneath, — a ceremonial new to us.

The landlord is a jolly fellow, and evidently a popular character in the village. He had spent eight years roughing it in America, back in the 50’s, had seen St. Paul, Minnesota, when there were but three hundred houses there, and had voyaged on a log raft down to St. Louis. We spent much time this afternoon gossiping with our host over his experiences in the West, and went with him to the top of the house to visit the studio of his brother, who is an artist of some local note. The brother, himself much of a wan-

derer, and a Bohemian, entertained us pleasantly with specimens of his art. He has done some really creditable original work in Dartmoor scenery, and turns off with facility quite excellent copies of Landseer, — pot-boilers, he said, much more salable than originals. The great dining-hall of the inn, the centre of interest on market-days, is panelled with his work, copied and original.

BARNSTAPLE, *Monday, 22d.* For two weeks past the daily papers have brought us news of rain almost everywhere else in the island save where we chanced to be. We are dodging the storms most remarkably. With us sunshine has prevailed ever since leaving Alton, and now we are having a long "spell" of hot weather. To avoid the fiercest of the heat, we waited in North Tawton until four o'clock this afternoon before starting on our run of twenty-seven miles down the valley of the Taw to Barnstaple town.

There was not much running, the first seven miles out to Eggesford. In crossing over from the Taw branch to the river Taw itself, we had the water-sheds of several of the former's affluents to climb, and found the road blanketed an inch deep with dust. Through gate-openings on the hill-tops, came cooling whiffs of air from off the wide-spreading moor; but in general we walked in a narrow way, close set with hedges, and the atmosphere was oppressive.

Eggesford is composed chiefly of laborers' cottages. There is a prosperous-looking inn, The Fox and Hounds, set off to one side of the isolated cattle-market, and a neat, wholesome appearance to the village in general. It is the centre of the Duke of Portsmouth's magnificent estate, through which our

highway leads as far as the inn and railway station of Portsmouth Arms, five miles beyond.

Emerging from Eggesford, the road closely follows the river Taw, sometimes to the east and sometimes to the west. The valley is charmingly picturesque. On either side are heavily wooded acclivities, the stream itself meandering through a rich meadow averaging a third of a mile in width, gay with buttercups and dotted with grazing cows and sheep and horses. The highway is for the most part on a bench cut in the timbered slope. Often we pass for a mile or two beneath an arch of interlacing boughs. Frequent springs gurgle over the inner bank, and gathering in wayside brooks, rush through culverts beneath the stony path, in noisy haste to seek the meadows at our feet. The arts of forestry are in full progress here. The trees are cut up on the hillsides, and rolled down to widened places in the road, there to be stripped of bark and made ready for transportation on the railway, which closely follows the river below. Fagots are leaning against the bank by hundreds to-day; the small branches, carefully peeled, are done up in bundles as well, and wagons loaded with bark may be seen unloading into goods' vans at the occasional stations. Now and then the Taw closely hugs the slope traversed by our highway, and a slip might easily shunt us into the stream. There are pretty effects in such sweeps as these. Sometimes the graceful river is hidden in a bower of trees and overhanging bushes; and at other its little cascades and swirling rapids are half revealed; a bubbling, splashing, swishing torrent is this tantalizing Taw, darting hither and thither, making music for us on our way.

It is a quiet, isolated road down the Taw valley to the sea. Between the few small hamlets which cluster around the railway stations but little life is seen. We meet a few foresters' wagons, but only two traps are seen all the way from North Tawton to the outskirts of Barnstaple (styled Barum on the milestones and finger-posts).

We arrived at Bishop's Tawton, a rustic village in the Barnstaple suburbs, just as the inhabitants were enjoying the twilight after supper. Our advent was the source of much astonishment. As we paused at a rude well for a drink, a score or so of ancient men and dames clustered about us to examine W——'s machine. There was a subdued murmur of applause as she deftly mounted and made off by my side. We felt we had conferred a blessing on these good gossips by giving them something to talk about apart from themselves.

Newport, a nearer suburb, is modern and pretentious; but the well-paved street was an agreeable variety after the ruts and dust of the valley way. It was now getting dark, and we are without lanterns on this trip, having no thought of needing them. The sun had set to-day at 8.18, and the law of the road allows cyclists to run an hour after that without a light; but as it was now 9.20 by the Newport church clock, we interpreted a policeman's glance thither as a gentle hint, and walked the last mile into Barnstaple (twelve thousand five hundred inhabitants) down a most delightful descent.

Despite the darkness, dimly pricked out by widely separated gas lamps, W——'s wheel appeared to attract general attention in the quiet streets of this

dingy old town. By the time we reached The Royal and Fortescue Arms we had an interested following of about one hundred Barumites, old and young of both sexes, who lingered about until ostler and Boots had trundled our conveyances within, and shut the great door in their faces.





CHAPTER XII.

ON THE NORTH DEVON COAST.

ILFRACOMBE, *Tuesday, June 22.* In American eyes, English villages generally have the appearance of possessing a smaller population than the census reveals, whereas the towns frequently take on a more metropolitan aspect than would an American community of the same size. The former is accounted for by the extraordinary crowding, each cottage and alley swarming with humanity; the latter by the fact that while the area of the place is not great, the better class of business buildings are for the most part solid and dignified, such as can be seen in few American towns of the same relative importance. Barnstaple, well built, with an agreeable air of steady-going prosperity, is one of these deceiving towns; its business quarter, set down in America, would do credit to a city five times the size of this. There is little, however, to detain the tourist. The Taw valley has broadened here into a tidal marsh, the river being crossed by an interesting stone bridge of sixteen arches, which tradition ascribes to the thirteenth century. A quay of extensive proportions flanks the city's river-bank, and upon it is a handsome colon-

nade crowned by a statue of Queen Anne, from whose reign it dates. The church, which before the Reformation possessed numerous beautiful chantries, has now little to recommend it save a graceful spire. Barnstaple Harbor has been of importance for at least six or seven centuries, although it has lost something of its former prestige. At the time of our visit, the shiny blue banks, which at low tide mark the passage of the Taw through salt meadows to the sea, were undisturbed save by a few small coasting craft lying idly on their sides, waiting for a lift from the returning flood.

This afternoon, leaving our machines and most of our other impedimenta at the Barnstaple inn, we came on by rail to Ilfracombe, a side trip of sixteen miles. The intervening country is hilly, and most of it apparently uninteresting. The roadways in this dry season are as dusty as they well can be, causing us to rejoice that we had not tried to wheel upon them. The downs are treeless as a rule, and their soil fairly cultivated.

Ilfracombe is the most popular of the many North Devon seaside resorts. But here again we are ahead of the season; and as we walked down into the town from the lofty railway station, the spick-and-span new "boarding establishments" lining the steep path had little red and yellow card-board signs in practically every window, announcing that rooms were to be rented there. As for the hotels, they are legion; and some of them are perched on the most commanding of the craggy heights which almost surround the harbor,—offensively prominent in every view, thickly silhouetted against the dark-blue sea.

After tea we had a quiet stroll up the winding Capstone Parade, from which there are delightful views of the picturesque little town below, and of the busy harbor, which is one of the safest on the Bristol coast, and the centre of a considerable herring fishery. Walking down to the port, past a curious old lighthouse, — formerly a chapel, — situated on Lantern Hill, we paused to watch a small party of tourists disembark from the Clovelly steamer, and then threaded our way among nets and kegs and miscellaneous marine stores piled upon the quay, on a tour of inspection of the herring-boats which thickly dot the basin.

A little knot of fisher-folk in front of a row of queer old buildings, whose open timber-work is fast falling into decay, attracted our attention. Two stout picturesque dames, with blue jean skirts scarcely below their knees, kerchiefs tied loosely at neck, and red shawls crossed over their breasts, were emerging from the group, each with a huge feather-bed in her arms, which she walked off with as though it were a pillow. Drawing near, a dozen or less fishermen, in their jaunty Jersey blouses, with courteous silence, drew aside to make room for us in the circle; and we found that The Golden Lion Inn and its few effects were being sold under the hammer, by a queer little dried-up auctioneer, with metallic voice and frozen smile. Near him, languidly leaning against a fish-barrel, was a great, misshapen, greasy fellow, hairy and louty, dressed in a shiny suit that had once been black; on his head an old straw hat bore a white band, on which was rudely printed the words, "Public Crier."

The woman who kept the toll-gate on the pier stood by our side, — a bright-eyed, buxom woman of middle age, who made running comments on the scene, apparently from the standpoint of a social position which in her opinion was a degree above these rude toilers of the sea. She said that the old woman who had carried on the inn lately died; her sister was therefore realizing on the estate, and the house was to be torn down.

“How old is the inn?” I asked.

“Hawful ol’, sir! Hi should say it be long afore my granna’s time.”

“Two hundred years?”

“Oh, ay, sir! han more ’n thet, sir! Hunnerds o’ year ol’, — shameful ol’, sir! Hi say, shameful ol’!”

“Why shamefully old?”

“Well, sir,” — puzzled, apparently, at being asked for a reason, — “Hi don’ know, sir; but it teks a heap all the time to be a-keepin’ hup o’ thim old uns, sir; an’ this un’s got beyon’ it, sir!”

The auctioneer was a domineering fellow, and doubtless understood his audience well. He would allow no untying of parcels of herring-nets or other property, for purposes of inspection. “Tek ut or leave ut!” was his cry, when some fisher, man or wife, displayed too much curiosity, and then he would add in a supplicating note, nodding towards the scrawny old sister in the doorway, “Giv the ol’ ’oman a chance, folks, woan’t yous?” The nets went for twenty-five and thirty-five cents each. Two earthenware herring-pickling jars, of good classical shape, and large enough to have held one of the forty thieves in the “Arabian

Nights" tale, went for a dollar the pair. This sacrifice of a good thing made W—— wish we had not forsworn purchases of bric-à-brac upon this wheeling tour; as it was, it was an effort to keep from bidding on what would have been an acquisition in any American hall-way. The pier-woman, from her long study of tourist weaknesses, understood their value, and whispered to us, "My! but many a leddy as paints, m'am, 'ud geev anythin' for them pair, to decorate wi'!"

Wandering at will through the old inn, now almost stripped of its belongings, we found many quaint nooks, and a marvellous antique brick oven built into the wall. Two quaint settles in the tap-room were quite to our fancy, but I suppose they went for their value in kindling-wood. A beautiful specimen of a "grandfather's clock," on the stairs landing, caused us to suspend the rules; and W—— hastened down to the crabbed sister to ask if this could not at once be placed on the auctioneer's stand. But it had been sold for four dollars to a curiosity-dealer just before our arrival, and was not in the market; the dealer will want fifty dollars for it at least, and in America a hundred and fifty could not buy it. The opportunity of a lifetime had been missed, and W—— sadly hurried me away out of further temptation.

Returning through the narrow streets of the fishing town, — a well-defined neighborhood distinct from the tourist quarters, — we were again at the base of Capstone, and surprised to see how many were gathered in the concert pavilion, on the beach, and along the parade, when it had seemed from the window-tickets as if nearly every room in the place was vacant.

There is an agreeable variety of entertainment to-

night. An Italian band, with a tenor vocalist, hold forth in the pavilion. "Sequah, the American Doctor," — a long-haired, brazen-faced quack, in a buck-skin suit and a sombrero, — parades the streets with a cow-boy brass band perched in a gilded circus chariot, stopping now and then to harangue the people (who seem to take him seriously) and gather in shoals of shekels, in exchange for a nostrum supposed to cure rheumatism or whatever else ails the purchaser. We have heard of this fellow elsewhere, — in fact, it is said there is a stock company, "Sequah, Limited," which has some half-dozen Sequahs in the field, operating in as many European countries this summer, and all of them coining fortunes for the shareholders. "The American doctor" part of it is what makes me indignant, for two thirds of the people we have heard speak of him honestly believe he is a fair type of our medical men. Upon the beach, the Salvation Army and Mr. Punch are bidding for popular attention, in lively opposition. From our chamber, as I write, it is difficult to say which is getting the best of it out there, — the shrill rattle of the puppet policeman, or the tambourine of the little black-eyed Salvation lass who sold us the "War Cry," which W—— is reading by my side.

ILFRACOMBE, *Wednesday, 24th.* The Lynton coach picked us up at our hotel this morning at nine o'clock. We were fortunate in having a rather better company than one is apt to fall in with on domestic touring routes, — a self-satisfied though rather green young clergyman of the Establishment, with his supercilious but pretty wife, and her fault-finding mamma ; two pleasant young photographic amateurs, laden with plates for

marine views, who, having knocked about a bit in their search for the picturesque, talked well of their experiences; the other two or three were non-communicative people of the lower middle class, who seemed to stand in awe of the parson. The driver was one of those cheap professional wits, who deem it necessary forever to be acting the part of buffoons, in order to keep up their reputation. His quips and puns and sallies rolled out in a constant stream, in season and out, as though he were wound up for the journey, and under contract to evolve a specified number of witticisms *en route*. Whenever the jocular Jehu chanced to be silent, the parson essayed to guy the guard, — a rough but good-natured lad, who early let us understand that his “only wages were what the passengers chose to give him;” the boy was quite equal to the occasion, and almost invariably turned the laugh on his tormentor, who, however, seemed too obtuse to understand that he was being beaten at his own game.

The seventeen miles from Ilfracombe to Lynton embraces some of the finest scenery in western England. For about four miles out the coach-road winds along a bench cut in the steep cliffs, which often rise sheer from the sea; and there are grand views, changing at every turn, of the blue waters of Bristol Channel and the dark, rugged outlines of the deeply dentated coast of Devon. Here and there ravines (locally “combes”) run far back into the country, each of them bearing a sturdy little stream in its bosom, and generally crowded with luxuriant vegetation. At the long, straggling village of Combe Martin, — deep down between bald hills in which

silver was mined in Elizabeth's day, — we leave the coast and course inward for a mile or so, alternately climbing steep hills, at the base of which the gentlemen dismount to ease the load, and on the other side descending at a mad gallop on three wheels, the fourth being blocked with an iron shoe manipulated by the agile guard. This is the northern edge of Exmoor, ever to be famous as the country of "Lorna Doone." The moorland, heather-clad, almost treeless, and with comparatively slight cultivation, stretches in billows southward as far as the eye can reach, — a noble expanse for the sportsman, and still filled with possibilities of dire adventure to the luckless traveller who misses his path amid wintry storms.

Lynton, our coach-journey's end, is a pretty little village at the top of a sea-cliff four hundred feet high. The air is bracing up here, and the marine view superb. But of more especial interest is Lynmouth, nestled at the base of the height, down by the beach, where two little torrents join forces before plunging through the rocky village street into the sea. It is no wonder that artists congregate in squads at Lynmouth; it abounds in pretty bits, and no view of it is without charm. Nothing here is oftener depicted than the old tumble-down pier, beyond which the village, with its background of cliff and forested ravine, with the zig-zag roadway up to Lynton chiselled from the solid rock, presents a most exquisite picture. Upon this pier, with an antiquated inn hard by, and the white station of the coast guard, is a small tower with a curious battlement, of which the artists never tire. A guardsman, idly scanning the peaceful channel with his glass, told us that the picturesque tower was formerly

a sea-water tank for the neighboring fishermen's cottages. Fifty years ago a gentleman ornamented it with two red-brick balconies, giving it a distant resemblance to a ruin on the Rhine. Since then the decorated tank has been sketched, painted, and photographed thousands of times, yet few know its history. The guardsman, a modest young fellow in his natty blue blouse, talked freely enough of his life, when once started, but with becoming modesty. His story of the experiences of the Lynmouth patrol, one stormy night last winter, was thrilling enough for a chapter in a marine novel. A wreck occurred in a fierce snowstorm down the coast a few miles, and the guardsmen started out over the cliffs to get in range for throwing the life-line. Though in summer knowing every stone on the rocky path, from their daily patrolling, in the violence of the storm they lost their way, and wandered aimlessly about nearly all night, finally bringing up, famished and frost-bitten, at a farmer's cottage, miles away from their destination. Fortunately the men on the stranded vessel managed to get ashore themselves, through the terrible surf, and were at the station before the guards returned.

After paying homage to the North Walk, with its widespread view of the sail-specked channel, and to the Valley of the Rocks, one of the wildest and most desolate of scenes,—it is graphically described in "*Lorna Doone*,"—we lunched at the hotel, and later mounted our coach for the home run, for which a gentle shower had meanwhile laid the dust. The pugnacious parson was now disposed to be rudely critical of America. As we walked uphill together,

near Panacombe, he said he thought he might get to feel at home in Australia, India, or the Cape, should fortune turn his steps thither; but in America he knew he should be "frightfully homesick, you know."

Wherein did he suppose lay the difference, — "the absence of the queen's colors"?

"Oh, no! you know; not that at all, you know! But the language, don't you know? The language!"

"I fancy you would find a good many people talking English fairly well over there," I replied encouragingly.

"But such beastly English, don't you know? Tell me, sir, why it is you Americans don't all talk alike. Some of you chew up your words so, and others have such a horrid twang, and such mannerisms, you know! Learned it from the Indians, I suppose. Really, it's most exasperating, this sort of thing, you know! Why can't you all talk alike? There would be some living with you then."

"Can you tell me why Englishmen don't all talk alike, — why the Hampshireman can with difficulty understand the Devonian; why the Cockney is so far away in his dialect from the North Countryman? Did you never realize that the Queen's English is nowhere so badly mauled as in some parts of England, and that there are even English gentlemen who fairly load their speech with mannerisms?"

He made no reply to this, but stared at me with some surprise, and trudged on silently till we mounted again. There was a pretty scene as we rattled through Combe Martin at a swinging trot. A score or more of barefooted children ran alongside the

coach, pelting us with rude bouquets of roses and honeysuckles, and screaming all the time a sing-song greeting, which not even the parson could comprehend, until the guard interpreted it thus:—

“ Scramble fo’ yo’ ha’p’nce, zur !
Scramble fo’ yo’ ha’p’nce, zur !
Scramble ! Scramble ! ”

And the way they scrambled for the pennies and half-pence, when once their plea was made understandable, was a sight indeed. Over and over they rolled, boys and girls, down in the dust and among the roadside weeds, regardless of rents and bruises, and never satisfied, until at last the driver snapped his long whip, the leaders jumped forward with a snort, another volley of dusty bouquets came flying in our faces, and we rapidly pulled out from the shouting, laughing Exmoor urchins.

BARNSTAPLE, *Thursday, 25th.* At Ilfracombe this morning we took an excursion steamer for Clovelly. Our seventy fellow-passengers appeared in the main to be small tradespeople out for a holiday ; they ate sandwiches most of the time, talked shop, and discussed the probabilities of sea-sickness. Fortunately the sea was smooth, although several sharp showers tested our mackintoshes, and drove every one not thus provided to the stuffy cabin.

The wrinkled shores of Bideford Bay, as we steam closely by, present a remarkable panorama of rugged cliffs, richly varied in form and color. The reddish rocks, patched with gray and green lichens, have fantastic sky-lines carved by ages of beating storms ; ample caves are washed deep in their bases by the

waves ; bold and sombre forelands here and there project into the deep ; and from outlying reefs nestling water-fowl rise in clouds at the whistle's shriek.

Clovelly is a fishing village nestled in a steep, slender, and winding combe. From the narrow beach of rocks, protected by a ponderous L-shaped pier, forming a snug harbor for a considerable fleet of black-hulled herring-trawlers, the one street ascends in a zigzag stair not over a rod wide, for full half a mile, to the summit of the wooded plateau above. The sides of the ravine are so abrupt that the stone cabins and cottages flanking this staircase street have back yards often higher than their chimney-tops. From the sea, the houses appear to be clambering up the cliffside on each other's shoulders, their whitewashed walls and bright green blinds contrasting strangely with the dark background of forest and storm-scathed rock. Except upon the beach, where one or two horses are engaged in pulling up boats and hauling loads of seaweed, donkeys only are employed in Clovelly, and no wheeled vehicles have ever been known upon its flight of stairs. Visitors coming by steamer are taken ashore in small boats, as we were, and obliged to climb up, while ruddy fishermen in blue Jersey blouses earn a few pence as porters from those bringing baggage. Heavy packages are slung upon donkeys' backs, or hauled up on hand-sledges. Those arriving by coach or carriage dismount at the cliff-top, where the post-house is kept, and descend to the town by the same avenue of rugged steps, similarly aided, if need be, by donkeys and porters.

Clovelly has the reputation, well based, I think, of being the quaintest and loveliest village in all Devon.

It is fairly stormed by artists all summer long. Every corner and doorway, every stretch of the climbing street, and vista of huddled stone cottages, has been sketched and painted at least scores of times ; every inhabitant, man, woman, and child, has done duty as a model, — place and people are continually on exhibition. At the Royal Academy show in London, we had seen numerous bits of Clovelly, and yet none of them are Clovelly itself, and will surely disappoint us when we see them again at Burlington House, now that we have been on the ground. Clovelly is a picture, from one end to the other ; a panorama possibly might do it justice ; it cannot be taken piecemeal. It is for this reason the photographers despair, for while they take charming pictures of the place, none of them are quite satisfying to one who has been there.

After lunch at The New Inn, — a veritable curiosity-shop, — halfway up the village, we ascend to the top of the angling street, turning around every now and then to drink in the marvellous view : dark, serrated cliffs up and down the coast, with breakers softly lapping at their bases ; about us the forested sides of Clovelly combe ; and over there to the right, the green masses of the woods of Clovelly Court, the home of the manor lord ; below, the quaint, white village rolling down in terraces to the deep blue waters of Bristol Channel, which, stretching far beyond, flash prettily in the sunlight, while on the distant horizon the rugged shores of South Wales are dimly visible. Lundy Island lies out to the left, a pile of bluish rock seventeen miles away, apparently easy of access, but in reality difficult to reach in any but the calmest

weather ; the farmer and his half-dozen men, who are at home on Lundy, lead a life as isolated and storm-tossed as any to be found on the outlying isles of Britain.

We had a delightful dash over the Hobby Drive, a woodland avenue three miles in length along the cliff-tops, with sylvan and marine views charmingly intermingled, and then returned to the village to explore the "back stairs," and hobnob with the shrewd fisher-folk, — who, in these days, cast their nets for herrings only when tourist fishing is slack. There are somewhat over a hundred houses in Clovelly, and a population of eight hundred ; the importance of the sight-seeing element may be appreciated when it is known that upon some fine summer days there are as many as a thousand visitors wearily dragging themselves up and down the half-mile staircase, and half the cottages in town are filled with weekly lodgers. The hotel rate is about two and a half dollars a day ; and at the cottages, an exceedingly simple fare and service for somewhat less, — "with a trifle extra for the waiter, sir, if you like, when you leave."

At a quarter past five we ascended once more to the cliff-top, and took coach for Bideford, — a pleasant rustic trip, though tame enough when compared with our coaching tour of yesterday. Our fellow-travellers this time were specimens of the "'Arry" class, — with a propensity to patronize the inns *en route*. From "the little white town of Bideford," lovingly known to readers of "Westward Ho !" a short railway journey brought us back to Barnstaple and our wheels after an enjoyable diversion.



CHAPTER XIII.

SOMERSET, AND THE VALLEY OF THE WYE.

G LASTONBURY, SOMERSET, *Friday, June 26.*

We had spent more time on the coast of North Devon than we had originally allowed ourselves, and to make it up, took the 11.45 train from Barnstaple this morning, reaching here by the way of Taunton and Highbridge at half-past five this evening, — a roundabout trip, with several long waits at junctions; except on the great trunk lines you cannot go far in England by rail without such.

On our way we traversed Sedgemoor and Brue Level, — great, flat, treeless expanses, once hopeless swamps, but now reclaimed by the drainage ditches which checker the country on every hand. There are few villages, but the plains are dotted over with grazing cattle and sheep, and to the southeastward are bounded by low ranges of hills, — between outlying spurs of one of which, the Polden Hills, lies King's Sedge Moor, where, a hundred and six years ago, was fought the last battle on English soil.

Upon the Brue Level, peat-cutting is an important industry, having its centre at Ashcot Station. The deposit varies from three to ten feet in depth, being underlaid by water and a clayey subsoil. It is sliced off down to the clay as you would cut cheese, and the peat — locally, "turf" — cut up into blocks about the size of a building brick. These blocks are piled, cob-house fashion, to dry in the sun; and in localities along the old Brue canal these singular-looking black piles, often a dozen feet in height, are thickly strewn about as far as the eye can see. Ordinary blocks of dry turf retail in Glastonbury for twelve cents per hundred; they emit a fierce heat, and are used chiefly for getting up a quick fire to be followed by coals. As a regular fuel it would be expensive at this price. At Ashcot a company is engaged in making from them a patent kindling, which is said to be popular. A strip of land denuded of its peat presents a most melancholy appearance; the yellow clay, diapered with little lakes, appears to have lost all capacity for usefulness. Occasionally such bare spots are filled in with earth from the neighboring hills; but I believe that the rule is to let Nature work out the salvation of the despoiled tract. We are informed that in this district the decomposition of ferns, heath, and other vegetables will result in twenty years in the replacement of the peat-bed.

Glastonbury, on the eastern edge of Sedgemoor, is one of the most ancient of English towns. When all about was swamp, this was the Isle of Avalon. According to monkish annals, Saint Joseph of Arimathea, who buried the body of Christ, was sent by Philip of Gaul to Christianize Britain, and built here the first

Glastonbury Abbey of wattles and timber ; another of stone succeeded it, to be improved in turn by Saint Patrick, Saint David, and King Ina of the West Saxons, — later to be replaced by the splendid Norman edifice whose ruins delight us to-day. Beneath the floors of this abbey the fabled King Arthur and Queen Guinevere are reputed to have been buried, together with a long line of veritable monarchs and prelates whose monuments have long since vanished. From the sixth century the abbey's record is complete, and it was even then an ancient foundation. Freeman says it is "the one great institution which bore up untouched through the storm of English conquest, the one great tie which binds our race to the race which went before us, and which binds the church of the last thirteen hundred years to the earlier days of Christianity in Britain."

Glastonbury is crowded with antiquities, — churches, almshouses, inns, and the secular buildings of the abbey, — and is altogether the most interesting old town we have yet quartered in. A short walk before dinner, and a long twilight walk after, took us into nearly every quarter. In the course of our ramble we stumbled by accident upon an old almshouse connected with a quaint little fifteenth-century chapel, hidden from the view of the street behind a grocery store. The chapel care-taker is an old gossip who lives with her husband in one of the eleven cottages in the long double row. There was little of interest within the sanctuary, save the thick walls with oaken timbers projecting, and a curiously panelled window. Better worth attention was the cicerone's cell, into which she invited us, — a little room ten feet square,

with furniture of the style of Queen Anne, protruding beams, and high latticed windows. Above was the bed-chamber of this ancient couple, reached by a staircase as steep as a ladder. The charity has an old foundation,—for men only, though they may bring their wives; the former may stay here till death, with house and garden rent free, but when widowed, the women must go out into the world to shift for themselves. Unlike most almshouses, there is here given neither money nor food; this failure to provide fully for the inmates seemed, in the mind of our hostess, a neglect almost criminal, and the founder's ears would have tingled had he been present in spirit to listen to the estimate placed on his beneficence. Not but what she herself managed somehow, for now and then a tourist hunted her up for the chapel key, and that meant a sixpence; as for the others, the Lord only knew how they made both ends meet — honestly.

As we bade our friend good-night, in the thickening dusk, two other heads protruded over half-doors, down the almshouse alley, and two shrill female voices bade us come and see their cottages as well, which were much better than the one we had been in; sure, that was as new as could be, and theirs were "the h'only real ol' cottages o' t' h'Abbey times!" Glastonbury is fully awake to the mercantile value of being a veritable antique; even her paupers contest for the honor of living in the oldest cell.

WELLS, *Saturday, 27th.* The George Inn, at Glastonbury, is of the fifteenth century, and originally served as a hospital for the entertainment of pilgrims to Saint Joseph's shrine. In its palmy days, the

abbey abounded in holy relics, and attracted crowds of devotees from all quarters of the land. The Red Lion, near by, which was formerly the great gate of the abbey, is no mean attraction. The fine old church of St. John the Baptist, with its Perpendicular tower, and the fourteenth-century kitchen of the abbey, a massive structure with four fire-places, early claimed our attention this morning. The crowning glory of Glastonbury, however, is the graceful ivy-grown ruin of the abbey church. Before it was dismantled by Henry VIII., this structure must have been one of the loveliest works of Saxon-Norman architecture in all Britain, a marvel of airy elegance. Streets full of cottages and chapels have been built from the fallen stones of the abbey, yet enough remains standing of the richly sculptured pile to impress the beholder with awe and admiration.

At twelve o'clock we set out on our wheels from Glastonbury for the cathedral city of Wells, six miles to the northeast. Having purchased and had shipped home some of the local pottery, the works interested us, three quarters of a mile out. The men were at dinner; but the foreman good-naturedly exhibited the various processes of vase, tile, and machine-brick making.

A shower had set in meanwhile, but we found good shelter beneath a wayside row of willow trees, a half-mile beyond, and there being nothing else to occupy us, did what Englishmen would have done under similar circumstances, — lunched. Our light repast was nearly over when two tramps appeared and sought a dry spot hard by. One of them, a bulky, battered fellow, with a jovial countenance,

though lacking one eye, opened the conversation with remarks upon the weather, and found me in a complacent mood.

"Ah h'ain't from these parts, sir," he replied, when I questioned him as to his home; and then, inquiringly, "Ah think Ah be from your parts, sir, — down below." I thought so too, I said.

At this, his companion, a cadaverous ragamuffin, put in a whining plea for "coppers for drinks," as they had had neither food nor drink to-day. The drinks, I assured them, they would be best without, but they might have the remains of our lunch. This apparently was pleasing news; and while we sat on the bank in our mackintoshes, and the rain pattered about us, the pedestrians stood and chatted and munched their cake and cheese a few feet away. They were seeking for work, said he of the single eye; but there was nothing doing at haying so long as it rained, and "t' glass, missus, is set awfu' bad, and woe be to us this comin' week, an' t' weather wet!" A poor place was Glastonbury, where they were bound, — no workhouse there. But workhouse rules are very unfair, wherever they be. A man is given a free night, but after breakfast they set him at a hard task, sawing wood or breaking stone, and he is not released till eleven of the morning, when the day is half gone, and all chance for getting work gone with it; and then he must move on to the next parish. The workhouse plan was discouraging to a deserving poor man, and no mistake. They both had wives and families depending on them, but there was no chance ever to get ahead.

The rain had ceased for a time, and we ourselves

prepared to move on, again declining to contribute "coppers," but not failing to receive the blessings of our fellow-wayfarers, who now bent their steps towards Glastonbury. Frequently, as we pass through the country, we see notices displayed, warning the public against giving money to wandering beggars, as all needy cases will be promptly attended to by district-relief committees, who issue tickets to mendicants, after the fashion of some of our American organized charities. In the Isle of Wight, the public is similarly warned against "German bands and other vagrants," — a classification which might perhaps be obnoxious to Emperor William, whom the royal family are just now preparing to entertain sumptuously. We hear a great deal in America about a system of assisted emigration, by which British paupers are given a free ocean trip by her Majesty's government, and unloaded on our shores; yet I saw to-night in the Wells post-office a royal proclamation, warning intending emigrants against going to the Argentine Republic, because they would be "doomed to disappointment" if they went out hoping to better their condition there; this does not look like a desire to assist emigration.

We were no sooner in the saddle than skurrying clouds once more veiled the heavens, and emptied upon us a drenching storm. There was every prospect now that it had come to stay, so buttoning up our mackintoshes and getting the luggage-carriers well tucked in under their rubber wraps, we set out to brave the elements. Luckily the wind was astern, and we rode on smartly over a shining road, across the wide plain of East Sedgemoor, seeing little

through the driving mist beyond occasional farmsteads, cattle cowering under willow-clumps, and now and then a wayside public with cart-horses steaming and fretting without, while their drivers stood in the doorway with pipe and mug, looking after us with evident amazement.

We were dismounting at The Star Inn in Wells (forty-six hundred inhabitants) just as the cathedral clock struck two, none the worse for our long pull in the rain, and enthusiastic over the quality of English mackintoshes, which had been severely tested. There were but slight showers thereafter ; and towards evening the sky cleared, verdant Wells now looking its prettiest, scoured and polished by the deluge. The cathedral is accounted by many authorities as the finest on the island ; certainly, the entire cluster of ecclesiastical buildings — the cathedral itself, the Episcopal palace, the deanery, the picturesque vicar's close, the chapter-house, and the ponderous gates — impressed us more profoundly than has any other ecclesiastical group in England. As for the west façade of the fifteenth century, with its elaborate decorations and its six hundred sculptured figures, it is far more attractive than I had imagined it could be, from published descriptions ; yet so great is the multitude of details, the eye cannot grasp the wondrous beauty of each. We have found our appreciation greatly heightened by examining a notable collection of exquisite pictures of each of the six hundred figures, taken by a local photographer, who used as his tripod the scaffolding of the artists engaged in their restoration a few years ago.

Wells is no such nest of antiquities as Canterbury



MARKET PLACE, WELLS.

or Exeter. The interest of the tourist centres in the cathedral and its adjuncts; yet we should advise others to do as we did,—ascend Tor Hill by a pretty walk leading up through a tangled wood, for the sake of the fine view of the Mendip Hills and the flat expanse of Brue Level; and visit, too, the bishop's curious tithe-barn down by the shady river-side,—a rude stone shell six hundred years old, doubtless intended for defence in case of need, and now used for flower-shows, militia meetings, and public gatherings in general. Just without the old barn are the people's recreation-grounds; and out there in the twilight are at this hour gathered hundreds, old and young,—some playing at quoits, cricket, croquet, and tennis, others sitting on the benches, smoking and gossiping in the fading day, still others strolling arm in arm, as lovers will, along the arborescent paths which skirt the swishing stream.

BATH, *Monday, 29th.* After a quiet Sunday in Wells, with services in and rambles about the old cathedral, we started this noon for Bath, “twenty miles away.” There had been heavy rains along our route, making the road sticky in places; and although the sun now and then asserted itself through breaks in the clouds, the storm was evidently not yet over.

The first three miles out of Wells, to the straggling hillside hamlet of West Horrington, were mainly up-grade. But our walking was rewarded with comprehensive backward views of Brue Level, hereabout laid out in fine parks, glades and woodland pleasantly intermingling; the beautiful Mendip Hills, which we are climbing, are famous for their caverns and their

ancient lead mines, as well as being an early seat of Roman occupation; far off across the plain to our rear are Polden Hills, beyond which lies the battle-field of Sedgemoor. Prominent in the landscape is the sharp sky-line of Glastonbury Tor, whereon Whiting, the last abbot of Glastonbury and the friend of Wolsey, was hanged and quartered for bidding defiance to Henry VIII.

As we sat on the slope of Stoberry Hill, and lunched beneath a hedge, with Wells still at our feet, half buried amid its trees, groups of peasant women passed on their way home from market, for this is a trade half-holiday. Their dialect is strong, and their conversation coarse. They rudely stared at us, making remarks among themselves, and we thought them the most ill-mannered laboring folk we had yet met in England. Children were among them, like their mothers, carrying bundles on their heads and shoulders. One rude Amazon, who had passed us in a gossiping crowd, dropped her burden at the top of the declivity and came back at a swinging gait, shouting fiercely to two little ones who were struggling up at a snailish pace: "Git 'long wi' ye's, woan't ye's? Ah could 'a' bin to Horrins't'n by thees, on'y for thee slow covies!" And she boxed their ears and drove them on ahead of her at the point of her bayonet tongue.

Rain began softly falling now; and as we and the machines were well under cover beneath the arching hawthorn of a neglected hedge, we took out a batch of American newspapers that had reached us in the morning mail, and were at once in spirit four thousand miles away from the leaky roof of Somerset.

To none do the home journals seem so newsy as to the traveller far from his domestic hearth.

"Morn'n', sir! We 're met agin!" And looking up, there stood before us, twirling his hat in his hands, the communicative one-eyed tramp who had shared with us our Saturday lunch near Glastonbury. He had lost a promised job there, he said, because of the rain. Glastonbury had no almshouse, anyway; and it's never stay there he would, so long as there was a sleeping-place elsewhere. He had tried to work the Glastonbury parson for his railway fare, but the parson would n't nibble, more's the pity; and so he had turned round and was tramping back to Bath, where he hoped to find a job that would earn him his night's lodgings. Perhaps our tone towards him was less sympathetic than on Saturday, for after mumbling something about the unkindness of man to his fellow-creatures, he left us hurriedly and trudged on ahead; W—— suggested that possibly he feared we were about to give him some more of that indigestible Glastonbury cake.

At the brow of the hill we remounted, and soon passed our friend of the road, who looked wistfully after us. The ridgeway which we now followed was sometimes hemmed in by the high stone walls of prosperous-looking estates, with flanking rows of elms interlacing their branches overhead. Again, there were miles of tall, dense hedges, through whose gates we had glimpses of fertile fields and sheep-sprinkled pastures beyond. Sometimes low walls of stone alone bounded the well-macadamed street, and then pleasing vistas over wide expanses met our uninterrupted sight, — parish churches lifting their gray spires above

the trees, the smoke of laborers' cottages lazily seeking union with the low-hanging clouds, rude hamlets sprinkling the country-side, the bucolic arts in practice everywhere ; a quiet, earnest, rustic life in progress here, just as it progressed a half-century ago or more, feeling none of that feverish unrest which turns the outer world topsy-turvy, making us ashamed to do things in the way our fathers did them.

Near Emborough hamlet there was a pretty sight, — an elm-shaded brook down in a wayside dingle, with laughing children paddling about over the moss-grown pebbles which line the stream ; and just above, undisturbed by the boisterous play, ducks sailing around in a weedy pool caused by a dam of the youngsters' making. An open wagon dashed by, filled with young fellows from Wells, one of whom served as guard and waked the echoes with a horn, — half-holiday festivities. Later we passed the merry-makers in the neighborhood of Chilcompton, refreshing themselves at a public-house, while the driver was sponging the mouths of his horses.

A smart little village is Chilcompton, as it lies partly in a pretty valley below us to the left, and partly climbing a hillside beyond. An old church, with one of those Perpendicular towers with which we are becoming so familiar, stands dark and solemn in the midst of the cottage roofs ; not three quarters of a mile away to the right, is the ancient church of Kilmersdon, — our roadway parts the neighboring parishes. We stopped at the summit of an incline to contemplate at leisure the vale of Chilcompton. Each hue and line was softened in this gray atmosphere ; there was a delicate charm about it all, hill and val-

ley, cottages and verdure, that brought to us a freshness of pleasure quite unspeakable. It was a scene to sit and dream over the livelong day.

While we sat there musing on a low stone wall, the Wells contingent passed with a flourish of trumpets, freshly wet. Soon appeared a stone mason in his suit of white duck, a basket of tools slung over his shoulder. I never knew an English rural workman who was not even too willing to stop and chat; and so I asked him the name of the town for the sake of opening a conversation. With great deliberation he came to us and sat on the wall near by, with many a rheumatic grunt at the stooping, before he found tongue for reply. He was a stout, weather-beaten old man, with evidences of dissipation, as with so many of his class in this island. His wages were equal to a dollar a day, he said. In Wales, he had seen, by a ticket nailed up in the public, they were advertising for men at a dollar and sixty cents.

Then why did n't he go? It was n't far off. Well, he did n't like to leave his family; then again, he would have to pay for his board, and also support his folks at home,—it was like keeping up two houses. He and his "ol' 'oman" could have a cup of tea each for the same money it would cost for one. Last winter, during the heavy "snai" (snow), he had lost eleven weeks' work. This ran him into debt for supplies, so that he owed a man ten dollars, which he could n't pay up. Thereupon his creditor had him go to jail for nine days, on plea of fraudulently trying to evade payment; there were twenty-six other workmen in jail at the same time, and all because of the "snai." To be sure, it was comfortable enough in

jail, and right warm; 't would do very well for a single man, that sort of thing, but a married man preferred to be with his family. While he was in jail, the "ol' 'oman" had to be earning some, though not enough could she get for two, so they ran more and more into debt. The "pais'n" (parson) had told him the imprisonment cancelled the debt; but he himself did n't know. Anyway, he had n't heard any more about it since, and had n't troubled himself to find out.

I asked him a good deal about the public-houses, concerning which he appeared to be well versed. The public in Chilcompton parish, which we had just passed, was closed at ten each night by popular vote; but that of Kilmersdon, just across the road from the other, was open till eleven. On Sunday, the publics are, by general statute, open to all callers, from half-past twelve to half-past two in the afternoon, and also from six to ten in the evening. At other times inns can furnish drink to their guests, and to all travellers who have come to them from a distance of over three miles. He himself knew one inn-keeper who would sell to nobody on Sunday, under any pretext. He did n't know the reason for it; it was "a queer doin's, this!" I suggested that the man was religiously inclined, whereat our friend laughed heartily in his wheezy way, saying he doubted there being much religion among inn-keepers.

W—— told him that we always found a Bible in the bedrooms of the inns, wherever we stopped.

"Ay, m'am; an' for thet, ye'll find a Bible, Prayer-Book, and hymn-book, in the cells of iv'ry jail too!" and he chuckled at his conceit.

He lost a good deal of time from bad weather in his business, he continued, as I questioned him further; but he had a brother in another parish, also a stone mason, who got his pay right along, rain or shine, having fallen in with a steady job of repairing on a gentleman's estate. As for another brother, who had gone to Australia "years ago," he had made money at gold-mining. "An', sir, — will yees believe it? — he owns his own farm now, sir, he do!" He sighed as he reflected on the great gulf between this land-owning brother's station in life and his own, but brightened up amazingly when at parting I placed a sixpence in his great rough palm. What a striking commentary this, on the difference between the condition of the English and the American workman! An American mechanic would have promptly knocked me down for insulting him with a tip after a roadside chat; but over here, the affront would consist in omitting it.

Three or four miles farther on, our way suddenly dipped between high stone walls into the deep little valley wherein lies Radstock, a coal-mining town, with a half-dozen shafts, each employing from a hundred and fifty to four hundred hands. It was market-day; and from the hillside, in descending, we could see that the high street by the railway station was crowded with miners and rustics, separated into knots around pens of live-stock, and before booths where vociferous hawkers cried their nostrums and cheap jewelry.

As we approached, other attractions seemed at once to lose their charm. It was necessary for us to pass through the market-place; but to ride was no

easy task, so closely did these thousand men press upon us in their gaping wonder to see a lady on a bicycle. "Well done, missis!" "She do ut as well as a man!" were the comments heard upon every hand, as finally we squeezed a passage through, and bowled off to the base of the farther edge of the Radstock basin, a hundred yards away. Here we dismounted for a long and weary climb. So long as we were in sight, there, below us, were a thousand upturned faces eagerly watching our progress, and now and then we stopped to look down upon them, right merry at the absurdity of it all. A balloon ascension could not have been more amazing to these Radstock folk, nor have attracted a more persistent gaze.

Turning a shoulder of the hill, and disappearing from their view, we rested a bit by a wayside spring. A brewer's wagoner came toiling upward, walking behind his cart. While W—— went on ahead, I drew back to walk beside our companion of the road.

"Missus rid'n' thet there mek great toke t'-night in Radstock, zur! Many, they think from picturs a leddy could n' do thet there! But now they seen your young missus can, an' thet mek great toke! You see thet folk they 'stonish ut you and missus?"

I assured him we were observant of the fact. He asked many questions about our cycling, — for instance, whether "missus" could keep up with me. His astonishment was open-eyed when I assured him she was fully capable of doing that; had she not been my equal in that matter, we should n't have started out together upon a tour of nearly eight hundred miles. Well, well! he was a great traveller

himself, for that matter, a-walking after his cart the greater part of the time. He went all around. He had even been gone from home several days at a time, and one day — and would I believe it? — he had travelled forty-two miles, which was no joke, he assured me. We left him after a mile or two, — in the course of which he told me three or four times over of his great pedestrian feat, — he going down a hill to the left to his brewery, a cluster of buildings in a little wooded vale, whence arose the wholesome aroma of steaming malt, while we kept on along the ridgeway towards Bath.

Within a mile or two of Bath, we could plainly see from our vantage-ground, across the undulating country, the great "white horse" of Bratton, in Wiltshire, fifteen miles to the southeast. The rude figure of a walking horse, a hundred feet high and long, is cut in the chalk declivity of a hill on the western confines of Salisbury Plain, on the top of which is the extensive Roman encampment known as Bratton Castle. While we were in the shadow of a cloud, the sun was shining brightly on the eastern hills, so that the effigy stood out with startling distinctness in its dark-green setting. The antiquarian doctors disagree as to the age of the Bratton horse, — some claiming it as an undoubted memorial of Alfred's defeat of the Danes at Edington, two miles away; while others assert that towards the close of the seventeenth century it was cut by the people of the neighboring town of Westbury in the midst of a protracted revel. There is another white horse in Wiltshire, at Oldbury, that can be seen for nearly thirty miles; but that is clearly a modern imitation, not older than 1785.

The great original is that of Berkshire, described so graphically in "Tom Brown's School-Days," and which we shall visit upon our way eastward. There is no one to doubt the antiquity of the Berkshire nag.

It had showered several times this afternoon. The entrance into Bath (fifty-four thousand inhabitants) this evening was by way of a sharp down-grade with many turnings, and the smooth surface so slippery with muddy slime as to be right dangerous for cyclists. With cautious grip we made the long descent, with no more serious accident than a spill to myself, which plastered my machine as thoroughly as though it had been steeped in a mud bath. W—— went safely through the ordeal, although she says her wrist muscles feel to-night as if they had been pounded with a club. I hardly know which is the most tiring, — a tramp up a steep hill, or a ride down such a one as here rims the river Avon on the south.

BRISTOL, *Tuesday, 28th.* After tramping about Bath all the morning, we ran up to Bristol (two hundred and ten thousand inhabitants) this afternoon by train, leaving our machines behind us at the hotel. Although no longer the chief seaport in West England, Bristol is still a busy town, and its fine harbor filled with shipping from America, Ireland, and the West Indies. From here, Sebastian Cabot sailed in 1498, upon the voyage which led to the Anglicizing of North America. Here was the centre of the kidnapping system which supplied indented servants for the American colonies; and Bristol profited largely from the early slave-trade.

There is an abundance of antiquities in Bristol.

The towering thirteenth-century church of St. Mary Redcliffe is a notable example of Perpendicular architecture; and Elizabeth described it as "the fairest, the goodliest, and most famous parish church in England." There is a double row of fourteenth-century shops and dwellings in Mary-le-port Street that would be the making of an antiquarian museum. St. Peter's Hospital, at the end of this narrow thoroughfare, is a combination of the domestic styles of the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and remarkably picturesque with its wealth of open timber-work, latticed windows, and carved brackets. The cathedral of the fourteenth century is full of interest; so are the "mayor's chapel," and dozens of quaint old buildings, domestic and ecclesiastical, in other parts of the city, upon which we are continually stumbling as we pick our way through the alleys and the by-streets.

Over the stone pavements of Bristol there is an incessant procession of heavy vehicles, even far into the night; and the din is deafening. London is quiet compared to it. Bristol street-crowds are rude, jostling, boisterous, especially near the harbor. We long for the quieter ways of the inland towns, feeling stifled in this hot and noisy atmosphere, redolent of tar and the smells of commerce.

MONMOUTH, *Wednesday, 29th.* We took train this morning for the Valley of the Wye, through Severn Tunnel, arriving at Monmouth (six thousand inhabitants) in the afternoon. Gray calls this birthplace of "Prince Hal" and Geoffrey of Monmouth "the delight of the eye and the very seat of pleasure." On the contrary, we find the dingy old town dull enough, and with few points of interest. It is well situated

on high land at the meeting of the Monnow and the Wye ; but life here seems hard and dry. Beyond the quaint seven-hundred-years-old gateway on the Monnow bridge, the architecture is solemnly mean. The remains of the castle where Henry V. was born are very meagre, although the sergeant who showed us around appeared proud enough of the bit or two of low, bare walls. A barracks now occupies the site for the accommodation of six hundred soldiers, most of whom are at present in a tented camp just without the town. A statue of Henry is displayed on the gloomy market-house, on Agincourt Square. The local church is an ugly conglomerate, constructed of the materials of previous sanctuaries built upon the spot, some of them of great antiquity.

There is a magnificent view from Kymin Hill, two and a half miles east of town. We climbed up there with much ado by a circuitous path, but were recompensed for the effort. The tortuous Wye valley, far above and below, lay like a map at our feet. While we were in sunshine, a storm raged over in the Welsh mountains, twenty miles to the west ; sometimes the peaks were wholly hidden from view in lowering clouds, which anon would lift and reveal to us serrated sky-lines silhouetted against darker masses of "thunder-heads" beyond.

We found a shorter path for descent ; but it is as steep and zigzagged as Clovelly, and as strewn with stones as the bed of a mountain torrent, in which capacity it doubtless serves on occasion. Frequent sidepaths lead from this to the rude stone cabins of peasants, which often have but one door, the ground behind being as high as the chimney-top. Live-stock

is necessarily in close communion with these hillside dwellers, under the same roof. No vehicle could ever ascend this rugged street on Kymin's slope, but we met laden donkeys struggling up at the point of cudgels in their owners' hands; and cows ascending from pasture, in the evening glow, were laboring homeward, driven by black-eyed, bare-footed maids, who spared neither words nor blows in urging on the panting beasts.

BATH, *Thursday, 30th.* We were off early this morning by train from Monmouth to Raglan, seven miles to the southwest. A walk of five minutes through the neat little village, with its market cross and restored church, brought us to the castle, made famous by the aged Marquis of Worcester's defence for ten weeks against the Parliamentary forces (1646). It is a most imposing pile, with moat and keep well-preserved and picturesquely draped with ivy. The great kitchen is still used to prepare food for neighborhood fêtes. Raglan is, by all odds, the most interesting castle-ruin we have yet visited in England, and is worthy of crossing the island to see. Like most other places of note in the Wye valley, it is the property of the Duke of Beaufort, who appoints gentlemen of the neighborhood as custodians of his several antiques; these engage workmen to keep them in repair, compensation being derived from the entrance-fees charged to tourists.

Booking through by train to Tintern, farther down the Wye, we were soon at the "ivy-vested wall" of Tintern Abbey, which is charmingly set by the river-bank in a winding tidal meadow, from either side of which sharply rise wooded hills of commanding

height. Built by Cistercian monks, who first celebrated Mass here in 1268, the shell of the abbey church is still complete, lacking only its marvellously groined roof and central tower. There are scattered about the remains of some of the secular buildings of the abbey; but they are insignificant compared with the sanctuary, which was of cathedral form, in the decorated Gothic style. It is ungrateful in us to dub the monks of old, drones in the human hive, when they left behind them such stupendous works of art as the ecclesiastical piles which fairly stud Great Britain and the Continent. They were the master-builders of their race; the architects of our time can do nothing better than imitate them in a feeble way. Tintern Abbey, in its sequestered vale, must in its day have been a sculptured dream. The contemplative man who chose to immure himself in this heavenly abode, in ages so vile as those we style mediæval, at least merits our sympathy.

Raglan we had to ourselves most of the morning; but one can seldom be favored thus at Tintern, which is much resorted to by West of England excursionists, who, we noticed, almost invariably brought their lunches. It appears that the hotels and restaurant proprietors in the straggling little village have overreached themselves in prices, and a strike is in progress among the visitors, much to the discomfiture of the former.

It is not much over five miles by the highway from Tintern to Chepstow, at the mouth of the Wye; and as the tide was in — to the betterment of the view — we concluded to walk. Two miles down the valley, near a rustic cottage whose inner walls are lined with moss,

a toilsome climb up a winding way — chiefly of rude stone stairs — brought us to the summit of Wynde Cliff. Here, nine hundred feet above the tide, there is a famous comprehensive eastward view of the Wye valley, and, far off on the horizon, the glistening Severn. The effect of looking down upon this broad expanse — of twisting, cliff-girt valley, the sombre stretches of the Forest of Dean to the north, and the hedge-streaked fields of Chepstow plain — is as if one were viewing it from a captive balloon.

Descending by a longer but easier path through the woods, we finally reached the highway again through a sheep pasture, near the beautiful estate of Piercefield Park, where for two miles we walked in the shadow of its high stone wall, unbroken save by two or three gates, through which we had lovely vistas of the demesne within. Had it been Tuesday, we should have been permitted to pass the lodge, and after a charming walk through the finely wooded grounds, emerge at the gate near Chepstow; but it was not Tuesday, and we trudged humbly on the outside, meeting country people coming from town in their little carts, — the men sometimes hilarious and the women with their hands full, at once jogging the donkey in the shafts and repressing the one on the seat.

Chepstow Castle is a typical Norman fortress of stalwart proportions and striking situation. On the town side it is defended by a moat, still used in part as the public duck-pond, while riverward its ivy-draped walls are a continuation of the perpendicular cliff upon which it is so grandly perched. Here Martin, the regicide, was incarcerated during the twenty years preceding his death (1680); and before his time (1656) it

was a prison for Jeremy Taylor. Chepstow is not so fine a pile as Raglan, but nevertheless is replete with interesting features, and one of the most romantic old castles in the United Kingdom.

It was interesting, on the railway back to Bath, to find in our compartment a Bristol merchant who had a reasonably clear perception of America, although he had never crossed the Atlantic, and talked intelligently of our affairs, fresh from a reading of Bryce's "American Commonwealth." A stout Conservative, he could not understand why we allowed such rascality in the management of our public affairs, — why Americans subscribed to funds to foment disorder in Ireland ; nor just what it was we saw, as a nation, to admire in Mr. Gladstone, who to his thinking was a political trickster ; or why we published such abominably sensational newspapers over on our side (some specimens had been sent to him by American correspondents, and he thought them fit only for the garbage heap). I did my best to enlighten him ; but I am afraid that when we changed at Bristol, in the midst of a pouring rain, and bade our hearty companion good-by, he was still of the opinion that American politics is demoralizing, and the tone of public life among us low. Indeed, Englishmen of intelligence appear quite generally to entertain this idea, be they Liberals or Conservatives ; and in the face of it an American over here finds himself often in the posture of defence. Bryce's work is doing something to counteract this ; but there are those who find in it nothing but confirmation of their views. The witnesses to our political rottenness, universally cited, are our newspapers. It is difficult to make Englishmen believe

that the journals grossly overstate the case in their bitter partisan strivings, and that official morality, except in municipal administration, is not essentially lower than in England; so long as a large class of American newspapers refer to Congress as a den of thieves, and joke about jobbery in our State legislatures, Englishmen, who take their own journals seriously, will continue to think of American politics as a sink of iniquity, and thank their stars they are still loyal subjects of Her Majesty, God bless her!





CHAPTER XIV.

FROM BATH TO OXFORD, BY THE WHITE HORSE VALE.

WOOTTON BASSETT, WILTS, *Friday, July 1.*

We did our duty by Bath this morning. At the Pump-Room, redolent of memories of Beau Nash, there were all manner of folk drinking the sweetish warm water and reading the morning papers ; we found it hard work to dispose of a glassful between us, although a jolly-looking bishop, near by, in his black silk stockings and short-clothes, took a quart with ease, laughing and chatting with a foppish friend, both of them enjoying the stuff immensely. The abbey is a handsome sixteenth-century structure ; but best of all sights are the Roman baths, especially those recently discovered. Standing by the brink of one of these ample basins, with the tepid water flowing into it through the very conduits used by the Romans, with sculptured pillars all about, and all the offices and apparatus of the once gorgeous establishment revealed, one is easily carried in imagination seventeen centuries behind our times. In stumbling across

WITH OTHERS





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BATH, WITH ABBEY AT THE LEFT.

the all-too-scanty remains of Roman magnificence in Great Britain, one is profoundly impressed with the pitiful waste of human effort. The Romans had reared upon this island a civilization second only to that of Rome itself, and yet it had all to be swept away before the inroads of barbarians, and the entire work done over again with the slow development of the new race. And I am not sure that we have yet caught up in all particulars.

It rained most persistently this afternoon while we wheeled to Wootton Bassett, — a run of twenty-five miles to the northeast. Closely muffled in rubber clothing, and with heads bowed to escape the pelting of the storm, we saw but little on the way. There remains to-night the general impression of a country for the most part level and well streaked with woodland. The hills which often closely girt our way abound in veins of a white building stone that is sawn into huge blocks at Box, near where we crossed from Somerset into Wilts, and also in other small towns through whose smooth and glistening streets we quickly flitted, at times half blinded by the sheets of water which struck us violently amidships.

At the ancient and busy manufacturing town of Chippenham (seven thousand inhabitants), where we stopped for lunch, there is a notable church, built evidently at different times, but having a general Norman aspect. Some deliciously quaint monumental inscriptions are to be found within. One of the brasses, dated 1620, had these curious lines interwoven with human figures holding branches, —

“Eche man’s a plant and every tree
Like man is subject to mortalitie.

These branches dead and falen away are gone,
 From vs vntill the resverection.
 These grafted thus by wedlock's sacred dome,
 (God gravnt) may flourishe till those other come."

Another specimen of the elegiac, which so delighted our forefathers, is inscribed on a flat slab dedicated to the memory of "John Ely, Gent., sometime burgesse of this towne, who died November 25th, 1663," and runs thus: —

"'Tis well I am stone, for to preserve his name,
 Who was, if mortal may be, without blame;
 In his religious, civil practice just;
 In his calling no traytor to his trust.
 If this report consuming time shall weare
 And wipe out — Search Heaven's records, 't is there."

The worst bit of road to-day was the half-mile-long hill leading up into Wootton Bassett. It is thickly laid with sticky mud, which might have tried our patience earlier on the tour, but we have grown callous to all manner of drawbacks. The sky had cleared by the time we wheeled through the portal of The Royal Oak at six o'clock, with every prospect of a glorious day to-morrow.

About all there is of Wootton Bassett is on this one wide street, half a mile long. Perhaps there are fifteen hundred inhabitants, certainly no more; yet centuries ago it was a place of no mean importance, and before the great Reform Bill used to send two members to Parliament. From the coffee-room we look out upon an ancient town-hall set upon stone pillars in the middle of the street. The open space beneath is now fenced in with an iron grating; and in the centre are exhibited the old stocks, which for-

merly stood in the market-place at the end of the hall. Originally built six hundred years ago, this little town-hall was "restored" in 1889, the extent of the restoration being the removal of the eighteenth-century plaster which hid from view the fine open timber-work. There yet lives in Wootton a man who for some drunken freak sat in the stocks for several days, thirty years ago, and collected as high as four dollars a day from sympathizing passers-by. At the time of the restoration the old reprobate begged to be again fastened in the machine, and greatly enjoyed the notoriety of doing duty as an object-lesson in history. Early in the present century there was still to be seen here an old ducking-stool, wherein shrews were seated while being doused in the village horse-pond; but the pool has been filled up, and the stool sent by the lord of the manor to some neighboring town not so rich in relics.

After dinner we hunted up the shoemaker, who keeps the key of the town-hall, — an intelligent man with a good knowledge of the history of his district. The room is no longer devoted to political purposes, but contains a number of historical relics of the neighborhood, and a library of two hundred volumes, which latter are circulated among as many subscribers, who pay fifty cents per year. An art class of fifty or so members also meet here; and some specimens of their work, which chanced to be on the easels, showed good instruction.

In thumbing an old volume in the library, I stumbled upon an interesting petition sent up by "the mayor and free-tenants of this borough" to Parliament, in the fifteenth century, which well illustrates

the notions of the rights of free common then existent, as well as other customs of the times, and the stout spirit of resistance roused in the hearts of these sturdy men of Wilts, when driven too hard by their masters four hundred and fifty years ago. It appears that the mayor and free-tenants of Wootton Bassett had from time immemorial enjoyed free common of pasture in Fasteerne Great Park, which contained two thousand acres. But the manor coming into possession of Sir Francis Englefield, he had enclosed the park, leaving the people only a tract of one hundred acres, called Wootton-Lawnd. They submitted without much demur for fifty-six years, making new pasture rules to fit the case, — "to the mayor two cowes feeding, and to the constable one cowes feeding, and to every inhabitant of the said borough one cowes feeding, and no more, as well the poor as the rich, and every one to make and maintaine a certain parallel of bound, set forth to every person." Englefield's son "did, by some means, gain the charter of our towne into his hands," and then began "vexatious suits" against the people relative to the common, and indeed "did divers times attempt to gain the possession thereof, by putting in divers sorts of cattell." The petition recites that "the Lord, in his mercy, did send thunder and lightning from heaven," which killed some of the said Englefield's cattle and drove the others out of the common; one cannot but suspect that the indignant commoners assisted in the operation.

The Englefield heirs, after a generation of this sort of petty tyranny, at last compelled the people wholly to surrender their rights of common, which always had been

a valuable commodity in the market, and take leases from the manor lord. The Sir Francis who was in possession at the time of the petition had followed all this up by closing certain by-roads in the town, and by shutting up the booths in the market-place, and — worst of all, apparently — “doth seek wayes and meanes to take the election of the mayor of our towne to himselfe, . . . which is a breach of our custome.” The paper pathetically closes: “And as for our common, we do verily believe that no corporation in England so much wronged is as we are, for we are put out of all common that ever we had, and hath not so much as one foot of common left unto us, nor never shall have any; we are thereby grown so in poverty, unless it please God to move the hearts of this honourable house to commiserate our cause, and to enact something for us, that we may enjoy our right again.” It is signed by the mayor and twenty-two inhabitants; and following their signatures is this suggestive note: “Divers more hands we might have had, but that many of them doth rent bargaines of the lord of the manner, and they are fearfull that they shall be put forth of their bargaines, and then shall not tell how to live; otherwise they would have set to their hands.”

It would be interesting to know the upshot of this turning of the trodden worm; but the dusty tome did not give the sequel, and the shoemaker, though otherwise learned, was as to this uninformed. The petition, however, presents a vivid picture of the times, and shows how deep-laid were the roots of the popular discontent which eventually blossomed into the English Revolution.

The wheezy band of the Salvation Army, now awakening the echoes of the market-place below, brought us back to the nineteenth century, and we descended to the street. Wootton, though a market-town, is a purely agricultural neighborhood, and altogether too rustic to support a local corps. The band is from Swindon, half a dozen miles eastward, and visits here three or four times yearly. With it were a dozen red blouses and poke-bonnets; and in the tail of the procession up and down the village street was a following of small boys, beating time on tin pans and making a rare hubbub. The Salvation bass-drummer was a character, — a great burly fellow, good-nature beaming from every wrinkle of his broad red face, and attired in toggerly which was a cross between the uniform of a Salvationist and that of a militia drum-major. He stepped ridiculously high; and now and then his baton would be sent twirling into the air, to be caught deftly in perfect time for the next stroke. This juggling performance appeared greatly to please the yokels, who admiringly laughed and cheered; and it was plain to be seen that the bass-drummer was a recognized star among the Swindon players.

Sometimes the corps would stop by the Sebastopol cannon in the market-place to form a circle for prayer and song and hoarse-throated exhortation; and then the boys were more vociferous than ever, pounding with stones upon the Crimean trophy, and upon the iron railing of the town-hall. It was certainly a great occasion for Wootton Bassett; and a white-haired smock-frock, leaning on his staff by our side, declared " 't were better 'n a 'arvest 'ome!" The Salvation-

ists appeared to enjoy it also, and took up a goodly collection among us all.

During a lull in the proceedings, I asked a mechanic, with whom I had picked up a chatting acquaintance, if Wootton was growing. "Not it, zur! It be goin' down'ard more, like 't be a cow's tail, I say! I bean't a native 'ere, zur, but I've hear'd tell on as there was oncet a fact'ry 'ere, zur; but there's none on't now, zur!" However, we noticed that there is a large brewery, as in almost every other English town we have been in; it is the one business on this island that can flourish in the deadest community.

OXFORD, *Saturday, 2d.* As we started out from Wootton Bassett this morning, the skies gave every promise of redeeming their sunset pledge. The air was soft; and Nature had been freshened by the bath of yesterday. Upon the level plain, which continues six miles farther to Swindon, fields alternate with woodlands. Bright scarlet poppies dazzle the eye wherever it rests, — amid the nodding grain, in the hedge-banks, and beside the paths; ox-eye daisies, meadow-sweet, and buttercups are still profusely in flower; smaller daisies everywhere assert themselves, also various kinds of mints, while pink and white roses are freely entwined with the hedge-thorn, and pretty grasses daintily garnish this paradise of bloom.

Leaving the spick-and-span new town of Swindon, — a creation of the Great Western Railway Company, whose extensive works are here, — we ascended a hill to the right, at the top of which lies the old town, which is rather picturesque, with some good shops and an excellent church. Downhill again sharply,

and we are on the high-road to Shrivenham, eight miles eastward. The path is still agreeably shaded and level, with the Ashbury and Liddington Downs looming up two miles to the right.

In the neighborhood of Stratton St. Margaret, a cheerful hamlet, a wayside pottery attracted us; its yard, otherwise kept up as a flower-garden, is well strewn with samples of the many kinds of drainage and roof tiles, garden vases, fancy flower-pots, and building ornaments made here. The proprietor, an honest-looking artisan of the better class, came out from his shop upon seeing us look over his wall, and seemed well pleased at our complimenting his artistic handiwork.

From Swindon to Shrivenham we pass alongside the Wiltshire and Berkshire canal. The channel, now seldom used, and largely choked with weeds, is frequently spanned by little counterpoise bridges. We stopped near South Marston to photograph one of these picturesque crossings. A smiling-faced old peasant woman, wearing one of the large white sun-bonnets peculiar to this region, was passing over at the time; and I hailed her to pause for a moment while I prepared for the shot. The ordeal over, she came to me and inquired my charge for taking pictures. I explained that it was merely a pastime, and asked her to stand by her brick cottage near by, and have her photograph taken, promising that should the negative turn out well, she should have a print from it on my return to America. Never did a prouder woman pose before a camera. Her husband, coming up at this juncture, was not to be outdone in gallantry, for he plucked from their neat

garden a corsage bouquet for W——, and presented it to her with much native grace. The farmer's wife, from over the bridge, now appeared, — a sprightly, intelligent, young married woman, who invited us into her dairy for a glass of milk. She had a brother in New Zealand, which fact she thought would interest us, we being from America, — a far-fetched conclusion, but doubtless in her mind these far-away lands are associated as next-door neighbors.¹

A mile or two on we passed the border into Berkshire, and soon were in Shrivenham, a delightfully quiet village, down whose broad street there was a charming vista, — clumps of elms in the centre of the roadway, with a double line of neat brick cottages, many of them freshly thatched, every garden showing its geraniums and wall-flowers; here and there was a timbered gable-front, and quaint little shops with bowed windows, in a style which has not changed in rural England these hundreds of years. Full of varied color is this delightful old village street, — yellows, reds, browns, and greens, and over the division walls nodding hollyhocks in a medley of startling hues. While we paused in the scant shadow of an elm to contemplate this pleasing picture of just such a village as Goldsmith loved, the parish church clock chimed the hour of noon, and a troop of fresh-looking children came pouring through a gate in a high stone wall, beyond which rose an ivy-clad National school. They flocked about us as we stood;

¹ The two canal pictures were developed satisfactorily, and copies sent to the Wiltshire woman as promised. A month later I had a pleasant note of thanks from the good farm-wife, who had acted as her secretary.

but all save a few of the boldest scattered like sheep, laughing and screaming, as I prepared to photograph them.

At the end of the village is the "big house" of the manor lord, Becket House; and here we turned from the Oxford highway, bearing off over a by-road leading towards Compton Beauchamp and White Horse Hill. At the parting of the ways, haymakers were at work in a field to the left; and beyond stretched an avenue of lofty firs leading up to the imposing mansion of the local nabob.

A mile and a half of level track, often overhung with elms, and crossing several pretty meadow-brooks, brought us to a large farmhouse, where we applied for directions as to the proper way to reach the White Horse, our faithful ordnance map being for once obscure. There came to my rap a young lady in black, both buxom and fair, who not only set us right, but treated us to a jug of milk, and bade us rest awhile in her cosey parlor. This farmhouse, the "big house," and the rectory, which we should soon see, were the only houses, she said, in all Compton parish.

"A lonely time for the parson, on Sundays," W—— suggested.

"Oh, there are a good many of us all together, in the three houses, you know; and then there's the cottage people, you know, besides." It must be a patriarchal scene, on Sundays and holidays, when the parish of Compton Beauchamp turns out *en masse*, — the squire, the rector, and the farmer, each in state with his family, and humbly in their train a throng of awe-stricken yokels.

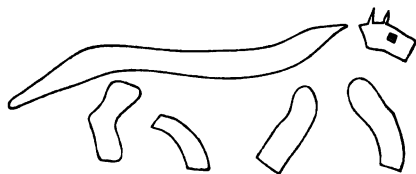
Just beyond was the seat of the squire, — a beautiful old mansion set in a wooded park, with impressive high iron gates at the entrance lodge. Here again, as at Becket, haymakers were busy in an adjoining field, but gathered in a group to talk us over as we rode by; evidently tourists seldom appear on this sequestered by-road. A little old church stood on the edge of a copse near by; just beyond the park lodge was the rectory, — an ideal dwelling in the pointed and gabled Elizabethan style, set in an extensive flower-garden, with a conservatory and many evidences of wealth and refined taste. Back of this cool, enticing picture abruptly rose the Lambourn Downs, with their rugged sky lines, all carpeted with light green sward, brightly lit up by the glowing sun. An old farm laborer, clean-shaven and white-smocked, evidently a superannuated pensioner, came hobbling by us with his stick, and stood against the great gates at the lodge, watching us intently. In his eyes, doubtless, our journeying through here on those outlandish machines was a strange freak, — something for the old woman and him to talk about, over their humble tea. “Rum uns, they!”

There were some gates to open and pass through on the way up a steep and winding way, then another high-walled farmhouse, with sheep grazing all around; and at last we entered upon a white, dusty road running at right angles to this, and turning to the left were at the foot of the famous White Horse Hill. Above and in front of us rose for nearly nine hundred feet the treeless down, — an outlying spur of the Lambourn range. Leaving our wheels stacked at the base, we clambered up a path faintly outlined

in the soft and springy sward, and soon stood beside the ancient effigy, which is barely noticeable in the road below, though distinctly visible for many miles off on the plain to the north towards Great Faringdon and the valley of the Thames.

“Carv’d rudely on the pendant soil, is seen
The snow-white courser stretching o’er the green :
The antique figure scan with curious eye,
The glorious monument of victory !
There England rear’d her long-dejected head ;
There Alfred triumph’d, and invasion bled.”

A few simple trenches in the chalk are all that form this figure, which Alfred is said to have delin-



eated here to celebrate his victory at neighboring Ashdown (873) ; although crude, it was an ingenious piece of work, and at a considerable distance, the glaring white, sharply contrasted with the deep green of the surrounding turf, represents with some faithfulness a galloping white horse, — the standard of the West Saxons, whom Briton's hero then commanded for his brother Æthelred. Each line or trench is about ten feet broad and a foot in depth ; and this outline sketch made upon the spot gives a fair idea of the work, which is three hundred and

seventy feet in length, and is said to occupy an acre of ground; the eye is represented by a patch of untouched turf, perhaps eighteen inches square.

The situation of the effigy on the almost abrupt slope of a hill, valueless except as a sheep pasture, has kept it from being washed away by storms, disturbed by cattle, or turned up by the plough; thus it has stood unharmed for these thousand years, and doubtless will remain secure from obliteration for another thousand. The growth of weeds in the trenches, and the crumbling of the turf on the upper verge, are, however, sources of danger early recognized by the people of the district, who appear to have had for ages past a rare fondness for the hoary monument. Some centuries ago, land-holders in the vicinity were obliged by the conditions of tenure "to cleanse and repair it." These conditions have long since been cancelled; but the custom of assembling here from time to time, and pulling the weeds and otherwise keeping the trenches intact, is still in vogue, — the "scouring the horse," as it is called, being the occasion of a rustic holiday and much merry-making. This work had been done not long before our visit, for upon the turf still lay withered weeds, — "hairs plucked from the old mare's tail."

The White Horse stands at the head of a deep and narrow ravine, locally dubbed "the manger," the sides of which are horizontally wrinkled, apparently from early land-slides, — "the giant's stair" of "Tom Brown," who gives a loving description of this storied region. A soft blanket of turf covers the entire down; upon the "stair" there is a dense growth

of delicate grass, as compact and lustrous as velvet, which, tossed by the breeze, exhibits iridescent shades of yellowish-green; while all around are swarms of little yellow and purple flowers, strangers to us, and masses of mint which emit a pungent odor as we crush them under foot.

Up beyond the White Horse, still quite a climb, is the grass-grown earth-ring of the Danish camp, — Uffington Castle. It is even now, after these thousand years of storms, some six or eight feet in height, with a deep ditch without, and might be a mile in circumference. Here, on the highest ground of the district, lay the invading army the night before the momentous battle, — Æthelred and Alfred being encamped on hill-tops to the west, near Ashbury. The view from the ancient rampart embraces a complete sweep of the horizon, — roundabout and far southward, the sturdy Lambourn Downs, one great sheep pasture; to the north, the well-wooded Vale of the White Horse, traversed by the river Ock, which pours into the Thames at Abingdon, twenty miles northeastward. Dotted here and there throughout the broad vale are villages, — Uffington, Goosey, Challow, Balking, Shellingford, and a score of others dear to every reader of "Tom Brown;" their red-tiled roofs gleam vividly amid the dark trees, and bits of new patching fairly dazzle the sight as the sun sparkles upon them. The square towers of little Norman churches are frequent in the scene, with now and then a modest spire. Small puffs of smoke go swiftly darting across the lowly landscape, over the meadows and threading the woodlands, marking the passage of trains on the Great Western Railway between London and Bath;

while flitting clouds throw strong lights and shadows on the variegated surface of the vale.

It is lonely up here on the hill-tops : we see only a few stray sheep, widely scattered ; on the slopes far below are occasional shepherds and their flocks, and folds made of wattled hurdles. Winding along in front of the Castle, and disappearing to the east over the Ilsley Downs, is a broad Roman road, — the Ridgeway, or Ickleton Street, now grown to turf, but as clearly defined as in the days when the legions of the Empire made and trod it. A horseman, trim as English riders always are, came galloping along the ancient thoroughfare as we stood on the rampart, and after pausing for a moment to watch us, disappeared down a neighboring ravine. Soon we ourselves sought the White Horse once more, and then scrambled down to our machines. Turning to look back from the “stair,” we saw a procession of four ponderous plough-horses, two of them ridden, pass over the Ridgeway above us, a striking picture, — the great black beasts sharply outlined against the ethereal blue, and the sprawling white effigy beneath them, set in its frame of vivid green.

It was seven miles into Wantage, over a bench road at the base of the chalk downs, fairly level, and often prettily arched with elms. Below us to the left, not far off from our by-road, were the charming little red-roofed villages of Kingston, Lisle, Sparsholt, and Childrey. At Kingston we might have seen King Alfred’s “blowing stone,” which “Tom Brown” describes ; but we were hungry and tired after the goodly run from Wootton to White Horse and the brave climb up to Uffington, so after pausing a mo-

ment at the cross-roads for a council of war, concluded to push on to Wantage and lunch. Neither, we may as well confess, did we visit Wayland Smith's forge, the Druidical ruin, a mile west of the White Horse, which Scott has told about in "*Kenilworth*," nor go over to see the Roman remains at Seven Barrow Farm. It is impossible to turn aside for every monument near one's path, in a country packed so full of interest as is this dear old mother-land of ours.

Wantage (three thousand inhabitants), delightfully situated on the plain, a mile or two north from the base of the West Ilsley Downs, is a pretty, quaint, and peaceful market-town. It was the birthplace of the great Alfred, whose battle monument we have just been visiting. Count Gleichen's heroic marble statue of England's half-mythical worthy stands in the centre of the broad market-place, near the portal of The Bear Inn, where we stopped for lunch and rest. The inn itself, which has been in the family of our host since 1682, is full of interest as a typical old-time coaching hostelry; its monstrous gate, thick-strewn with bolts and bars, is a sight to behold. The cruciform parish church of the fourteenth century is also worthy of a visit. There are six priests connected with this venerable sanctuary, as well as a considerable sisterhood, which to a casual observer seems an undue allowance for so modest a town.

After an hour's refreshing rest at Wantage, where we would have liked to linger more, we were again in the saddle at six o'clock, with fourteen miles between us and Oxford. The first ten miles were over a well-kept road, stretching off through meadows and heathland. Beyond Grove, a quaint village in which nearly

every cottage is thatched, and where several aged men and women are attired in costumes that were fashionable a hundred years ago, we passed through no settlement worthy the name of hamlet. Now and then we caught sight of a little cluster of farmstead roofs through a clump of woods far off in the distance, or passed a thatched cottage by the wayside, or a dreary stone barn. In the long shadows of the evening, these sparse evidences of settlement, the hedgeless fields, the far stretches of desolate heath, and the gloomy forest bits through which we occasionally dipped, made up a picture of loneliness suggestive of a Dakota plain.

Near the thin line of settlement, which is styled Frilford on the ordnance map, we left the highway, and for a few miles followed a by-path, now thickly hemmed in with forest, now passing through picturesque openings, rich with underbrush and a wealth of copse flowers. In one sequestered glade the turf on either side was riddled with rabbit burrows. As we wheeled along, the cotton-tails would rush from their holes and scamper before us into the cover of the bushes, as many as fifty being in sight at a time. In another lonesome clearing stood a little brick school-house, fronted by a bit of garden which a young man and elderly woman were industriously weeding, with no other sign of human habitation visible for a mile in either direction, although possibly a village of laborers' cottages may have been hard by, hidden in the trees.

All along the main road the finger-posts and mile-stones had assured us we were right for Oxford, but this cut-short through the timber had no such guides as this. At one forking of the way, not down upon

our map, it was impossible to say which was right. Taking the road the most travelled, we soon were at a puzzling snarl of cross-roads, with a five-fingered post pointing to towns and villages of which we had no knowledge, and none of them to Oxford. It was not comfortable, the thought of having lost our way in these dense woods, with the sun already hanging low over the horizon, and we retraced our steps for half a mile to the forking, to await developments. Soon a farm laborer came up in a cart, assured us we had chosen rightly at first, and gave further directions which set us at ease. For a mile beyond the cross-roads our way lay through a damp avenue between the high stone walls of Besilsleigh Park, so overhung with trees that night appeared to have closed in upon us, and then we emerged upon the broad high-road stretching from Great Faringdon into Oxford, now half a dozen miles farther to the northeast.

Rolling country intervened, with a more prosperous settlement and cultivated fields. There were some quaint inns by the way, and here and there an allotment field in which villagers were delving in the sunset glow. Our ascent had been gradual up to Cumnor, on the western rim of the valley of the Oxford Thames; and from there was a breezy down-grade of nearly three miles into the town.

Our first view of Oxford, from the height at Cumnor, was just as the sun was sinking over the edge of the hills bordering the upper reaches of the Thames, which here describes an inverted V, the apex just beyond the sturdy Hill of Wytham to our north. Below us lay dark meadows, heavily clumped with trees, and over to the right the spires and towers of the

ancient university town rising above a mass of greenery. To either side, tumbled hills were edging the fertile plain. At first deep and height were alike veiled in bluish mist, until a momentary rent in the angry storm-clouds now gathering in the west let forth imprisoned gleams of light which brought out each landscape line with sharp distinctness. Then the black mass, rebounding, effectually closed in upon this lurid splendor. As we mounted for our final coast, hill-tops and plain were covered with the pall of night.





CHAPTER XV.

THE THAMES VALLEY.

A BINGDON, BERKS, *Monday, July 6.* Oxford is not to be done up in a day. There are reasons, however, why we should hurry on just now. A week or two hence we shall go again to the old college town by rail, and at leisure drink our fill.

We were off this morning at a quarter to eight, retracing our old path up Cumnor Hill, for our first objective point was Standlake. Baedeker had sent us thither upon this promising entry: "Archæologists may pay a visit to the 'British Village,' near Standlake, about 7 M. to the S. W. of Oxford. A little to the E. of Standlake, is Gaunt House, a moated dwelling-house of the 15th century."

Leaving Cumnor village, redolent of "Kenilworth" memories, upon its windy perch, we found a rocky by-way leading down through scraggy Eaton, and soon were wallowing in the mud of an unmetalled meadow road, with hedges and overhanging bushes still glistening with raindrops, for it had showered heavily at sunrise. The hedge-rows down here on the Thames bankside are sweet with honeysuckles

and elder blossoms, and occasionally resplendent with wild roses ; a yellow spurge is seen by the wayside, and everywhere a wealth of red poppies in the fields. Men and boys are mowing in the broad meadows, but with little spirit ; for several, looking upward at the sullen sky, assure us, as I hail them, that it is bound to be a nasty day, and little good is to come of their efforts. It is pleasant to be again in a region where a lady on a safety is not an object of curiosity. W——'s outfit attracts no more attention now than a passing trap.

We cross at Bablock Hythe ferry. The Thames is here but a few rods wide, winding gracefully through the verdant level. So great is the sweep around Wytham Hill, frowning darkly yonder to the northeast, and so crooked the channel, that this ferry, though only four miles by road from Oxford, is twenty by water. The only building in sight is the small Chequers Inn, on the farther bank, half shooting-box, half hostelry. The landlord hears our halloo, and sauntering down to the landing with a brace of retrievers at his heels, comes across on a rope-guided barge, the only one of the sort now left on the Thames, and for eight-cents toll sets us on our way again. A skiff laden with college men is going down stream as we pass over ; and another party of stalwart young oarsmen have left their boat at the little pier, and are having a tankard of ale in The Chequers porch.

Nobody at Bablock Hythe has heard of the "British Village ;" but pinning our faith on Baedeker, we plunge on over a muddy road, getting pretty views over the well-hedged meadows towards Stanton Harcourt, with its memories of Pope, its obelisks com-

memorating a famous battle in this neighborhood between the Saxons and the British (614), and its interesting architectural relics of the residence here for several centuries of the venerable Harcourt family. Branching off, however, and leaving Stanton Harcourt on our right unvisited, we push ahead through the delightful little rose-embowered village of Northmoor, and not far beyond are at the gates of Gaunt House, — one of the objects of our search. This moated mansion, some four hundred and fifty years old, is an excellent specimen of rural domestic architecture of the fifteenth century ; but although bearing the name of John of Gaunt, there is not the remotest probability that it was either owned or occupied by him. It is a squarely built stone structure, surrounded by a moat which still holds ten feet deep of water and mud, and is thickly sprinkled with water-lilies, which vigorously flourish here. The ditch is spanned by a covered stone bridge, closed at the land end by a stout oaken door bearing a mediæval knocker. The fresh and comely wife of the farmer who leases the holding answers our summons and kindly shows us about the rather gloomy house, which has many features of historic interest, her courtesy being capped by the proffer of refreshment. Gaunt House, she says, stood a siege in Commonwealth times ; and in clearing the moat four years ago, her husband found three cannon-balls, which are shown us as we take our leave.

A mile or so farther, through a driving mist, brings us to the straggling village of Standlake, — a population of seven hundred persons being housed in old-fashioned cottages stretching along for fully a mile

upon two roads crossing at right angles. Nowhere else have we seen so scattered a hamlet, each cottage having its own garden about it, and sometimes ample fields separating next-door neighbors. The villagers apparently are on different estates, which chance to join here.

Thus far, not a soul had any knowledge of the "British Village;" but the mistress of Gaunt House having suggested that the rector of the parish would know all there is to be known, we were soon rapping at the rectory door, the rain beating a tattoo upon our rubber cloaks, and some passers-by pausing to watch us, possibly thinking it a runaway couple applying for the good offices of the "pais'n." The parson was off in the village, and later we found him a third of a mile away, at the "coffee-room," — an old cottage transformed into a rude club-room where the young fellows of the neighborhood could gather from five to ten o'clock each evening for innocent recreation and reading, and, if thirsty, be served with temperance refreshments. It was the rector's method of running opposition to the public-house across the way; and much of his time, he told us, was devoted to the scheme. Just now he was busy receiving from the village children their weekly fee of two cents *per capita*, for the privileges of the reading-room.

Tall, smooth-shaven, with the face of a priestly scholar, is the spiritual mentor of this isolated Oxfordshire parish. A graduate of Magdalene College, — Standlake is one of its livings, — he seems well content to devote his life to the service of these dull rustics, doing what he may to work out their moral and economic salvation. Each peasant child, as with

trembling pleasure she laid her penny on his desk, was met with a sweet smile of recognition and a word or two of kindly inquiry; and an awkward lad, who came stumbling in to get a volume from the scanty store of well-thumbed books, was admonished for coming out of hours, in such manner as a gentle mother might chide her blundering boy.

Upon making known our business, the rector explained that the hour must be devoted to his little parishioners, but invited us to lunch with him at the rectory at one o'clock, when he would tell us all he knew about the "British Village." We spent the first half-hour in wandering through the hamlet, and the next in the grocery shop, where we had taken shelter from a passing storm, our machines being meanwhile housed in the grocer's barn. Punctually our host appeared upon the street, bringing sunshine with him; and we all walked leisurely towards the rectory, — a delightful old stone dwelling, with Elizabethan gables, roses freely clambering over porch and walls, and a broad gravel drive leading up to it from the highway. The house has been a residence for the local priest these six hundred years, and abounds in specimens of every style of English domestic architecture since its foundation. The quaint building is one of the most charming of abodes, and particularly interesting is the study, with its full oak panelling.

The rector's housekeeper is his sister, who chanced to be away from home to-day, so that we lunched alone with our kindly host, who, being well versed in the antiquities of the neighborhood, entertained us most charmingly with accounts of his researches among them. It appeared that the "British Village"

was not a village at all, but a cemetery, discovered in a field a half-mile north of Standlake church, in the autumn of 1857, by some members of the Society of Antiquaries of London. It consisted of a number of circular trenches and pits, in which were found urns and the incinerated bones of humans. The excavations were open only for two weeks, and then after inspection were filled in. Ever since then the land has been cropped as before; nothing now indicating the presence of the Anglo-Saxon burying-ground beyond the dark circles, popularly known as "fairy rings," where there is a richer growth of grain, owing to the greater depth of soil above the underlying gravel. Baedeker in this instance is clearly behind the times; and the archæologist who, upon his recommendation, "may pay a visit to the 'British Village,'" will find no more than a level field of oats marking the spot where once it was.

We did not go out to visit the oats, but examined a model of the cemetery made during the fortnight of its exposure, thirty-four years ago, and then passed a pleasant hour in the rectory grounds. These embrace several acres in garden, lawn, and copse, prettily situated along the river Windrush, — a tributary of the Thames. Our host permits the villagers free use of the greater part of his shady walks. Asked if the people abuse this privilege, he said that sometimes young men forget they are in private grounds, and commit damage; but he would not keep all out because of the actions of a few. Besides, he feels it his duty to educate his people up to a proper appreciation and treatment of such things. Old men liked to come to the path along the river, where there was deep shade from over-

hanging willows, and numerous benches set for them, there to dream the time away, "watching the running water, which seems to have great fascination for them." There are thirty acres of glebe, he said, attached to the living. This land he was fortunate enough to be able to rent. But the low price of wheat has created general distress, — "first, the farmers feel it, then the landlords, and then the parsons; we are catching it now." Farm land was a drug in the market, explained our friend, as he walked beside us, his hands clasped behind his back, his shoulders rounded with scholarly stoop, and his fine head covered by the flat felt hat commonly worn by the English clergy. "Yes, a drug in the market; often it is impossible to get a man to work it for nothing; and if the land is not worked, it will rapidly deteriorate." He talked freely and unaffectedly regarding the economic outlook, but never once seemed to forget in his care for worldly matters that he had a divine mission at his door. This thought appeared to lend a sweet dignity to his position in this humble parish, and incite him to intellectual efforts which narrower men reserve for a broader field.

While walking in the garden, we had evidence of the pastoral relation between parson and people. Our host was summoned into the house, but soon returned, saying that an honest villager had just called at the rectory to notify him that "two strangers had been seen in the place sketching." The circumstance amused us, being the strangers thus closely observed; but the rector treated it as commonplace that he should be kept informed in village news. We now proceeded to the church, which is as old as the rectory. It is being

restored with good taste, under the careful guidance of a leading architect. A low Norman arch is set between the nave and the unusually large chancel. The pastor and his flock would have liked to tear this out, as it sadly interrupts the view of the congregation, and prevents the choir from being fully heard; but the architect having said it would be a sacrilege to disturb so interesting and almost unique a bit of historical masonry, they had yielded to his judgment, and Standlake parishioners will continue to hear but a confusion of sounds from the almost invisible clergyman and choristers.

Bidding the rector adieu at half-past two o'clock, we reclaimed our machines at the grocery, and set forth due south to New Bridge, a few miles away, over level meadows bright with waving grass, in which haymakers were at work, men, women, and children. Overhead, light clouds scudded fast, sometimes in masses, again in open order, showing great patches of azure beyond. Between this and evening several showers fell; but they were as quick in passage as approach, and but served to freshen the face of smiling Nature.

New Bridge, despite its name, is the oldest crossing on the Thames, having been erected six hundred years ago by the monks of a neighboring monastery which to-day exists only in memory. It is a quaint, solidly built structure of seven pointed arches, in the midst of a graceful landscape, the low banks of the winding river being well hung with trees, while several picturesque old cottages of river-men closely nestle by the shore. Just above, the Thames receives the nitrous waters of the Windrush, now clear enough

after their service in washing the blankets made in Witney factories. Southward — in Berkshire, which we have entered on passing over New Bridge — rises Harrowdown Hill, up whose slope we have a vigorous climb, to find on the plateau that a head wind is prevailing, which quite upsets our hopes of passing the night in Market Ilsley, beyond Blewbury Plain and Ickleton Street.

That is how we came to put up at Abingdon (six thousand inhabitants), having made a circuit of twenty-two miles to-day, to reach a point but eight miles south of Oxford. It is a pretty spot, with the Thames meadows again at our front door, and Oxfordshire just over the river, and, after all, we are glad that fortune turned our wheels hither. There is an island in the middle of the river with an inn upon it; and a double bridge five hundred years old, with arches of dissimilar size, connects the two shires. In olden days, Abingdon was famous for its abbey, which ranked next to Glastonbury, and like it was confiscated and despoiled by Henry VIII. There are few ruins extant of this once extensive and beautiful establishment. Of the church, which, in splendor, doubtless rivalled Glastonbury, there is nothing left, — enough remains of the refectory to show its once noble proportions and beauty, and here and there are fine bits of the old abbey walls, and a gate or two. Elsewhere are other remains of historic architecture, — chief among them being Christ's Hospital, an almshouse founded in the reign of Henry V., and the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Helen, both built early in the fourteenth century.

After dinner we strolled along the Thames tow-

path, getting fine views of the town, which is on a ridge overlooking the meadows. Numbers of people were out in the fields, like ourselves, enjoying the cool evening air. Upon the smooth river, near the lock, were aristocratic house-boats ranged along the shore, and numerous plebeian row-boats flitting hither and thither, bearing gay companies of young people, who thumbed guitars and sang operatic snatches with more or less harmony. As we stood by the lock, enjoying to our full this pleasant scene, a shrill whistle sounded from up the river; the tender and his children ran to the gates, and soon a long skiff with a half-dozen ladies and gentlemen aboard came shooting down the course and entered the basin of the lock, to be soon sent forth upon the lower level. A few vigorous pulls brought them to a boat-house pier, where they hauled up for the night. We have them for fellow-guests at our inn.

Thousands annually make the boating tour of the Thames from Oxford to Henley, and there is a considerable business at Oxford in the renting of skiffs for this purpose. It certainly must be a delightful excursion in many ways; but in the height of the season the river is rather too crowded for those who wish to take their outing upon unfrequented paths, where it is not necessary to peer over the heads of a throng of pleasure-seekers to have a look at the beauties of Nature.

STRATFIELDSAYE, BERKS, *Tuesday, 7th.* Having a long run ahead of us to-day, we were off from Abingdon at eight o'clock this morning, making the twenty-eight miles to Reading by noon, in the face of a head wind and frequent smart showers. Until near-

ing the Ilsley Downs, near Steventon, the country is rolling ; but henceforth into Reading, by the way of Blewbury, Streatley, and Pangbourn, we closely follow the river Thames over a broad expanse of flat meadows, studded with young timber. Every few miles there are picturesque villages, some of them neatly compact, others straggling around a verdant common, under whose tree-clumps cows and geese were clustered from the storm, in friendly communion. Parks, and the fine country mansions of the wealthy, were numerous along our shining route. Frequently we overtook truck-carts bound for the Reading market, the drivers crouching low on their seats, with great sacks thrown over their shoulders to keep off the pouring rain, and horses and ponies emitting clouds of steam.

Reading is the county town of Berks, and a prosperous-looking place of forty-two thousand inhabitants, with old buildings and new freely commingled. Our course lay through the heart of Reading from north to south ; and it was often with difficulty that we could thread our way through the maze of vehicles in the narrow artery, for it is market-day, and no Englishman stays at home because of wet weather. It was a relief at last to emerge from the crush and noise of the city, and be speeding across fields under a leaden sky. At Three Mile Cross, a small group of modern brick cottages, we turned off upon a secluded by-road, leading past the beautiful estates of Grazely Lodge and Oakfield House, and in a few miles reached the sedate little village of Mortimer Stratfield, just as the aerial flood-gates burst, and there seemed every prospect of Berkshire being washed off the face of the

earth. We had sought the post-office — a rose-clad cottage set in a glowing flower-garden — for information as to the road, and while the storm passed, stood at the box-window chatting with the mistress and her blue-eyed girl telegrapher (this is a land of postal-telegraphy), not venturing forth until the sun gleamed once more.

Three miles of rolling road, stretching off south-westward, lay between us and Silchester, the object of our search. The hedges are high and dense; hollow lanes frequently cross at right angles; the air is heavy with the mingled perfume of wild roses, elder, and white honeysuckle; campanula are on every side, with a sort of yellow bed-straw, ox-eye daisies, and fields in which scarlet poppies are more abundant than stalks of grain. Through hedge openings, on the summits of the rises, there are delicious landscape glimpses, — waving meadows, outstretched fields and pastures, and timber plantations. Primeval oaks are here and there seen, each with a kingly space about it, and lusty elms, copper beeches, and maples, all spreading a genial shade, welcome enough to grazing cattle during the few intervals of sunshine.

It is misting again, as — about ten miles from Reading — we cross the line into Hampshire; and there at once rises on our right, with a copse-grown fosse intervening, the hoary south wall of the Romano-British city now known by the Saxon name of Silchester, but doubtless the *Callewa* of the itineraries. There were partial excavations at Silchester in 1833; but it was not until 1864 that serious investigation was made, by order of the Duke of Wellington, on whose Stratfieldsaye estate lies this buried town of

the ancients. The work was, however, dropped until last year, when the Society of Antiquaries entered upon a detailed examination of the site, and is still engaged in the task. The remains found at this important military camp, on the old highway from London to Bath, are similar in character to those already unearthed at Wroxeter (Uriconium), in Shropshire, and at St. Albans (Verulamium); in Hertford; but the present excavation is to be the most extensive and systematic yet undertaken in England, and the published results will soon make Silchester the most famous of Romano-British cities.

The site of Silchester, concerning whose history we have little definite knowledge, occupies an elevated field of about a hundred acres, in one of the most isolated districts in rural Hants. The encircling wall, whose southeast corner now looms before us, jagged in outline and heavily grown to ivy and hawthorn, is made of flint with stone bonding courses; it is over nine feet thick, and averages, with few breaks, a height of twelve or fourteen; the southern flank, which we skirt in search of an opening, sometimes attains an altitude of twenty feet. At the distance of six hundred yards southwest of the corner, is a rude gap, where once stood the ponderous south gate. Wattled hurdles now bar the way, and there is displayed a notice in black letters rudely scrawled on a piece of unpainted deal:—

No Admission to Ruins only through wicket Gates.
--

The learned Society of Antiquaries evidently intends we shall seek entrance elsewhere. The wall at this point suddenly swerves to the northwest, off through a bit of gnarled copse ; and there being no wicket gates anywhere in sight, we plunge ahead for a half-mile or more, down the shaded and lonesome road, before reaching a human habitation. At a poverty-stricken cottage on the edge of a wood, a ragged boy directs us back by the path we came, with instructions to turn north at the southeast corner, through a dark lane, and enter "the ruins" through the rickyard of a farmstead which we shall find near the east gate.

With some difficulty we found the unticketed entrance, and after examining the curious stone farmhouse, a relic of the seventeenth century, passed on through the rickyard, greatly disturbing a colony of ducklings, and emerged upon a narrow by-road which crosses the Silchester site not far from the ancient east-and-west street. Hawthorn hedges line the level way ; and over them we caught glimpses, within the great circle of the wall, of fields of wheat and barley, and here and there in their midst ridges of earth thrown up from excavations. Halfway across there is a wicket on either side, — each bearing the legend, "Admission 6d.," — the portion of the site lying to the north of the road being retained in the possession of the Duke of Wellington, whose agents still occasionally do some digging here, that to the south being rented from the duke by the Society of Antiquaries. Upon the duke's side, a few rods within the wicket, is a board shed wherein is exhibited a small but interesting museum of Silchester "finds,"

chiefly pottery, articles in bronze and iron, remains of decorated wall-plaster, pieces of carved stone, curiously marked roofing tiles, and portions of tessellated pavements. Near by are the foundation outlines of several shops and houses, with tessellated floors, and a well-preserved hypocaust.

A stupid old peasant is in charge, from whom information was extracted only by the most elaborate cross-questioning, — the extent of his understanding of the matter appearing to be limited to an appreciation of the fact that he was paid sixty cents per day the year around as the duke's care-taker, and that the annual receipts from visitors amounted to some fifteen or twenty dollars, with the attendance diminishing as the popular curiosity wore away. The aged cicerone was under instructions to accompany visitors in their wanderings south of the road also ; but upon our exhausting the duke's curiosities, he let us through the opposite wicket, and lay down on the damp grass outside until our return. The grain, which is growing thickly everywhere, except on the excavations, was sopping from the showers which have prevailed all day ; and in making our way along the narrow footpaths connecting the several points of interest, our rubber clothing alone saved us from being wet to the skin. But thus fortified, we wandered about at will on the extensive sites of the forum and temple, only the foundation outlines of which remain, with a few broken columns and capitals.

About three and a half acres of the field of Silchester are now being excavated, the area being surrounded by ridges of the earth which lies somewhat over a foot in depth over the ancient surface. These

ridges are strewn with placards warning the public not to venture into the space under investigation, the reason for this precaution being that every scrap of material which can throw light on the past is each day carefully washed and sorted. The duke claims possession of all finds, intending to present them to the Reading Museum, which has already largely benefited from his generosity in this direction. At the close of the summer's operations the earth will be replaced except over unusually interesting architectural remains, which may deserve to be placed on permanent exhibition; but all ground uncovered is thoroughly mapped, and sketches, models, and plans are made for the Society's use.

The work this season is confined to two squares, or *insulae*, on the west side of the basilica. In each *insula* there is a large proportion of open ground, thought to be gardens, with the foundations of numerous shops and dwellings along the street-fronts. The pavements unearthed are coarsely constructed, yet the simple red, drab, and purple *tesserae* were effectively blended by skilled workmen. Among the interesting finds this summer are the skeleton of a dog, and the skeleton and scales of a pet fish buried by its owner in a pot covered by a bit of flint. The season does not appear to have been characterized by any sensational discoveries, yet a great number of foundations have been laid bare, a considerable variety of pottery and other objects of use and ornament extracted, and some curious facts brought forth relative to Romano-British architecture. A score of workmen were engaged at the time of our visit, under the charge of two or three gentlemen representing

the Society. We were sharply watched in the course of our walk through the ruins, as though we might be bent on purloining, but having paid our shilling, took no notice of the fact that we were suspects, and saw nothing in the heaps of rubbish to tempt us to despoil either the duke or the Society.

Under a dull gray sky, with a Scotch mist almost continually enwrapping us, the temperature at the shivering stage, and mud enough on our boots seriously to impede navigation, we found this dead city of the Romans a most depressing place. Our curiosity at last sated, we were glad enough to recover our machines from the care-taker, who must have added to his rheumatism while waiting for us under the dripping hedge, and again to be on our way, — this time headed for Stratfieldsaye village, four miles to the east, where we were to put up for the night at the farmhouse of a Hampshire friend.

On a hillside halfway out, in the midst of a pleasing rural landscape, a gusty rain-storm overtook us, and we huddled for shelter beneath a high hedge overhung with trees. For three quarters of an hour we sat on the moist bank, great drops pattering upon our waterproofs, but avoiding the fierce downpour without, which soon overflowed the road-ditch and brought the surface pebbles rattling down the steep incline of the macadamed way. A ploughman, riding one great black horse and leading another, joined us in our misty haven; his shoulders were covered by a grain sack thrown loosely over them and knotted at the neck, — a favorite weather-shield among agricultural laborers and teamsters. He was a rough, pleasant-faced fellow, full of curiosity at our machines, but not

inclined to be communicative, and soon moved on, apparently doubting the efficacy of our leaky refuge. He had no sooner departed than a laboring boy, with bill-hook and lunch-basket, came scampering through the opposite hedge, and sought asylum by our side. A spare, wizen-faced lad, with a shock of red hair, well-patched clothes, and heavy brogans, was our companion. At first he seemed shy, but upon encouragement soon found his tongue. He was fifteen, he said. I asked him if he went to school, whereupon he straightened up and in an indignant tone replied, "I be through school, sir!" At the age of ten he had passed the fourth grade, the highest in his school, and thought there was little else to learn; his sister, two years older, had graduated with him. To be sure, he said, some schools he had heard of had six grades, but he did n't fancy such. Then again, there were boys who stayed at school till fourteen years of age; but that must be because some years they did n't pass. For himself, he had been at work since he was ten, at first getting thirty-six cents a week, but now he had got up to a dollar. Did n't know how much a man's wages were. Sometimes he had a half-holiday. Last year, under a former master, he was "bad [that is, ill] for a week," but his wages were not docked, which he thought very good treatment. Perhaps his new master — his family had just "shifted" to here from Silchester — would not treat him as well as this, but he did n't know; "very like" this master might give him a half-holiday now and then, and very like not, — could n't tell; would have to wait and see.

At last the clouds suddenly broke ; and Nature smiled as sweetly as though she had never frowned. The youthful drudge bounded off across the rolling fields ; we took up the line of march, and at a quarter to six were at the house of our friend, whose farm abuts one of the four widely separated clumps of cottages which together constitute the village of Stratfieldsaye.

STAINES, *Wednesday, 8th.* The day opened beautifully, with field and forest fresh from their bath, a faint southwest breeze, and the sun brilliant in an almost cloudless sky. At ten o'clock we bade farewell to our hospitable entertainers, and were off northeastward over a level road, a trifle heavy from the sandy ballast being still wet from yesterday's flooding, but on the whole good. All about is the well-kept estate of the Duke of Wellington, one vast park, with fine old trees, beautiful woods, and fertile meadows. Passing through two more of the village clumps, we came upon an open spot in front of the modest wooden gateway of Stratfieldsaye House, the duke's seat, where rises the nation's monument to his ancestor, the "Iron Duke," — a tall plain marble shaft with Ionic capital, surmounted by an heroic bronze statue of the hero of Waterloo. Here the character of the country suddenly changes ; the soil is thin and gravelly, dark plantations of pines succeed the oaks, elms, and beeches, in whose dense shade we have been wheeling, and there are wide expanses of moorland, purplish with heather, and ragged with furze and giant brackens.

Leading off from the base of the monument, a broad avenue has been cut through the pines as

straight as a die several miles due north towards Reading. We followed this undeviating highway for a mile or two, Wellington's monument proudly closing the vista to our rear, and then, once more in a fertile district, branched off at Swallowfield upon a winding by-road which took us through some of the most delectable rural scenes in all Berkshire, into the busy little market-town of Wokingham (three thousand inhabitants) on the western border of Windsor Forest.

After dinner at Wokingham (Oakingham of old), we left by the southern coach-road to Ascot, through the pleasant village of Bracknell, and in half a dozen miles out turned northward with the famous Ascot race-ground on our right. Like Goodwood, it is a turf-grown course; and sprawling through a large field of furze, broom, heather, bracken, and scrub-pine, its present dismal condition not even dimly suggests the gay scenes which each June make this patch of wild land the centre of the sporting world.

We are wheeling through the crown lands now. Windsor Forest comes up to the highway on both sides, occasionally broken on the left by small freehold tracts, on some of which are blocks of new brick houses, pretentiously tricked out with terra-cotta ornaments; there is a small wayside public, a petty shop or two, and a few modest thatched cottages inhabited by woodsmen. Along our well-kept way, for two miles north from the Ascot course, are numerous signs forbidding the public to venture within the forest, which is hemmed in with bare banks of earth, with hedges, or with palings. The phraseology on these signs is so awkward that we marvel at Her

Majesty allowing the rangers to misuse "the Queen's English" almost within sight of the windows of Windsor Castle.

The public road took us on through the simple gate of Hollygrove into the great park itself,—a magnificent tract of eighteen hundred acres, of which Pope, who loved its still haunts well, sung in words which are as true in our day as in his:—

"There, interspers'd in lawns and op'ning glades,
Thin trees arise, that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend;
There, wrapt in clouds, the bluish hills ascend."

It was a surprise to find so many stately oaks yet left, their gnarled and broken limbs suggestive of great antiquity; and the vast stretches of greensward between the clusters are wonderfully inspiring. The Great Park is even more impressive than our fondest fancy had painted it. Taking the upper road eastward, we had a beautiful panorama all the way,—a grand carpet of forest sweeping below us to the base of Castle Hill, which rises darkly upon the northern horizon, on its slope the red-tiled town of Windsor, and on its summit the massive fortress-home of her Majesty, over which was proudly floating the royal standard.

At the top of the Long Walk, that stately avenue of elms leading down from the Castle and up to Cumberland Lodge, there were gathered perhaps fifty of the neighboring gentry, with their carriages. This little company were waiting to see the German Emperor, who is being entertained just now by his imperial grandmother, pass on his way to a garden-

party at the Lodge. Chance had led us thither just in time to see the procession come in sight down the walk, and slowly approach us on the up-grade. First appeared two anciently uniformed yeomen of the guard, finely mounted; next, an open landau drawn by four horses, with two gayly appparelled postilions; in this carriage were seated the Emperor and Empress, — a well-appearing but not impressive couple, the former being attired in the conventional afternoon dress of an English gentleman, the latter in bonnet and gown of pale pink. Both of them smiled sweetly, and acknowledged our salutes with well-trained grace. Following that of the guests were a half-dozen carriages, with the Prince and Princess of Wales and other ladies and gentlemen of the court, a small squad of cavalry bringing up the rear.

We were fortunate to have this "private view," so to speak, for on the occasion of the Emperor's state entry into London city day after to-morrow, the streets of the metropolis will be packed to suffocation, and we could with difficulty, even if we wished it, get the merest glimpse of the distinguished strangers. As it was, we were but twenty-five feet distant from them, and had not over fifty fellow-spectators. With our democratic notions, I doubt if we should have wheeled two miles out of our way in order simply to gaze on royalty; but when the spectacle was brought to our door, in this quiet sort of fashion, we were pleased enough at the incident.

Emerging from the park by the Bishop's Gate, it was a short spin into the hillside village of Egham, where a heavy shower sent us for shelter into a little grocery shop. The keeper, a woman of forty, with a

considerable family, said she had lived here for nine years, and had never yet set foot within Windsor Park, which is but two hundred yards distant, at the head of the street. Her husband had once been to Magna Charta Island, a mile away by a footpath over the fields, but for herself she had "seen none o' the sights hereabout."

At the first lull in the storm, we were off again down the mile-stretch of high street, and then through a by-way reached the country road which closely skirts the south bank of the Thames from Staines to Old Windsor, through the wide, swampy meadow known from time immemorial as Runnymede. To the south, rising gently from the historic mead, lies Cooper's Hill, one of the most commanding eminences in the valley of the Thames. On its slopes the barons camped when they brought King John to terms, in the marsh below, and Denham and Pope both have sung its praises in immortal verse. Egham occupies a part of this noted height, and upon it, also, is the extensive Royal Indian Engineering College, whose white and gray buildings peer imposingly above the tree-tops.

Coursing along the flat reaches of Runnymede, we keep a sharp lookout for Magna Charta Island, where John signed the charter six hundred and seventy-six years ago (June 15, 1215). But one must hunt closely to find it. Standing on the southern bank, it is difficult to tell the island from the northern shore, from which it is separated by a narrow bayou not visible from our path. Apparently the opposite line of meadow is unbroken. Only frequent questioning of teamsters passing along this rather dismal river-road

enabled us at last, a mile above Egham, to fix upon the location, which we were enabled to verify from an old print in our possession.

The rain was now fairly pouring upon us, and no trace of a shelter in this naked marsh; but being well waterproofed, we would not retreat without seeing what was to be seen of the famous spot. That was little, however. Upon the island is a small, pretty stone dwelling in the Elizabethan style, with a neat lawn and a thick growth of trees not readily distinguishable from those lining the bank above and below. We had been informed in the village that not under any pretext would we be admitted upon the island; and indeed we could readily see, across the stone's throw of intervening river, that all approaches from the south were carefully guarded against, the family entrance being to the north. The tenant evidently does not sympathize with tourists. There was nothing to do but stare at Magna Charta Island through the sousing rain, and reflect that if Runnymede was as damp as this on the immortal day, the armor of the barons must have creaked with rust.

A fickle climate this. When at last we re-entered Egham high street where we had left it, the clouds suddenly parted, and on our reaching Staines (five thousand inhabitants), a mile beyond, the heavens retained few traces of the storm. To-night, in the sunset glow, the Thames, gay with boating parties, rolls gently beneath our chamber window, like a stream of burnished gold.

CATERHAM, SURREY, *Thursday, 9th.* We were off from our inn at Staines this morning by ten o'clock,

and had a succession of large towns and intervening fields all the way across to Caterham, — Kingston, Wimbledon, Tooting, and Croydon, being chief among the busy suburbs through whose crowded streets we wheeled our way. "Greater London" is growing with a rapidity quite equal to some of our most thriving American cities. Not many decades hence, these outlying towns will meet one another across the fields and present a continuous line of buildings and metropolitan pavements from the Surrey heights into Cornhill.

After seven hundred miles of gypsying, it is pleasant to find ourselves once more under the hospitable roof which we have come to look upon as our English home; yet a dash of melancholy disturbs our comfort, for in housing here the wheels which have carried us safely through a realm of pure delight, we are parting from well-tried friends whom we shall sadly miss in the months of touring still to come.

.

On board the "Scythia," westward bound, September 24. In truth, we did most sadly miss them. The balance of our stay in Britain was spent in touring of the ordinary sort. Railways, coaches, and steamboats had thenceforth but little attraction for W—— and me. In stuffy compartments and in ill-smelling cabins, we sighed for the freedom of our cycles, for the fresh beauty of rural highways, for the privilege of lingering on breezy hill-tops and in sequestered vales, for communion with rustic folk, whom thereafter we seldom met; and we have come to regard our cycling experience of six weeks as of far more value than our

six months of conventional travelling, for on our wheels, as in no other way, we found just what we wanted to find, and saw what we set out to see,— what the hedge-rows say, and how John and Mary live in their wayside cottage.



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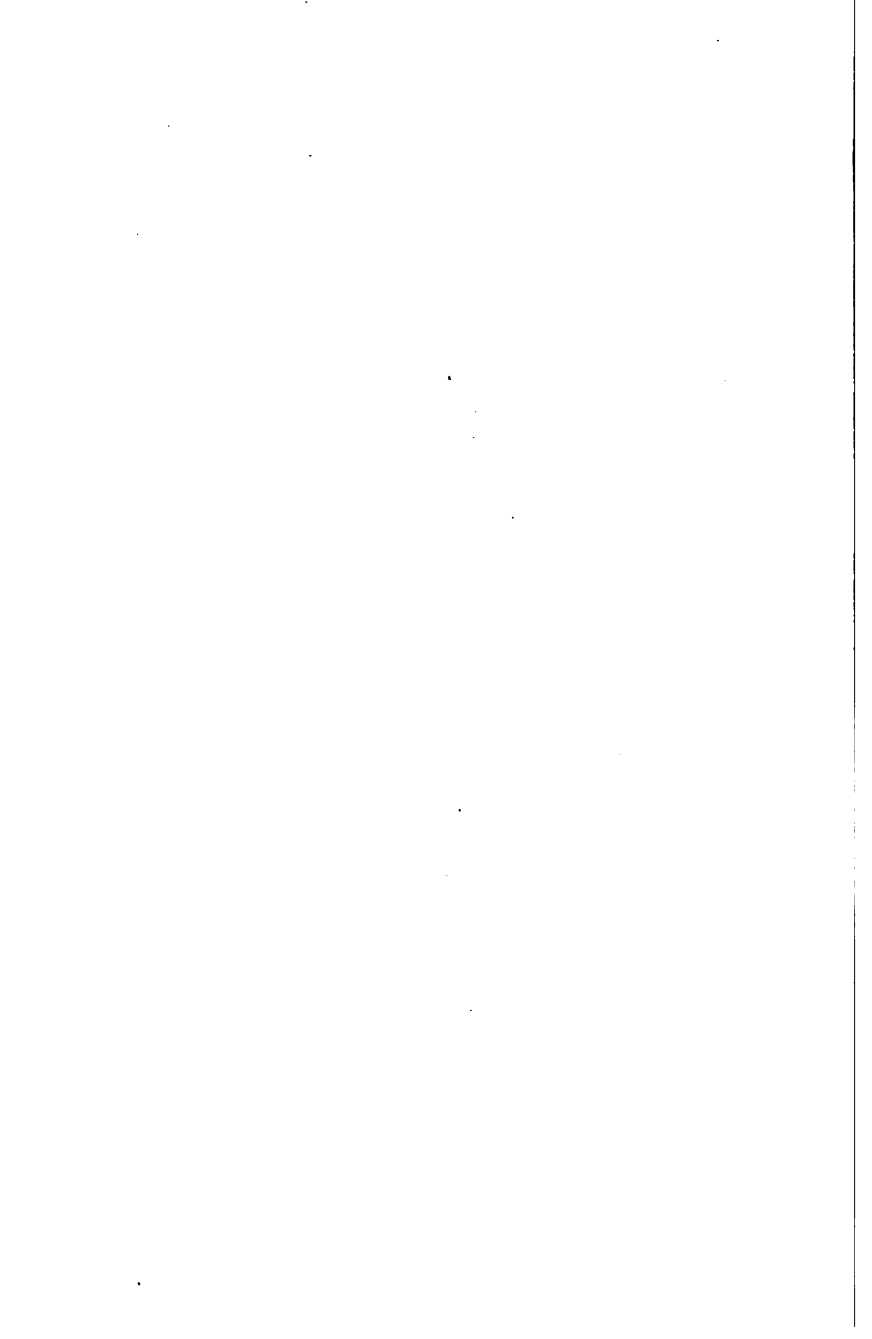
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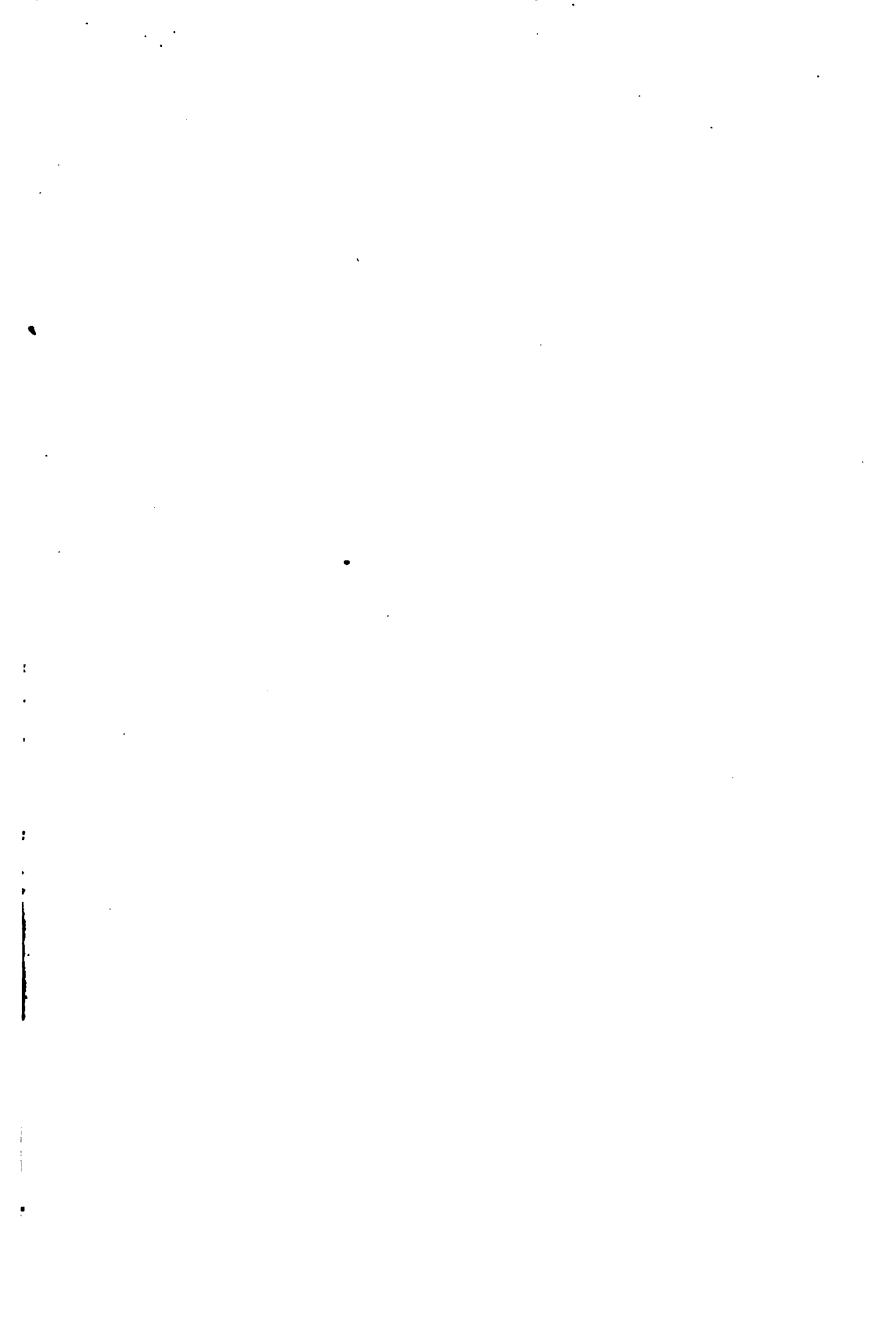
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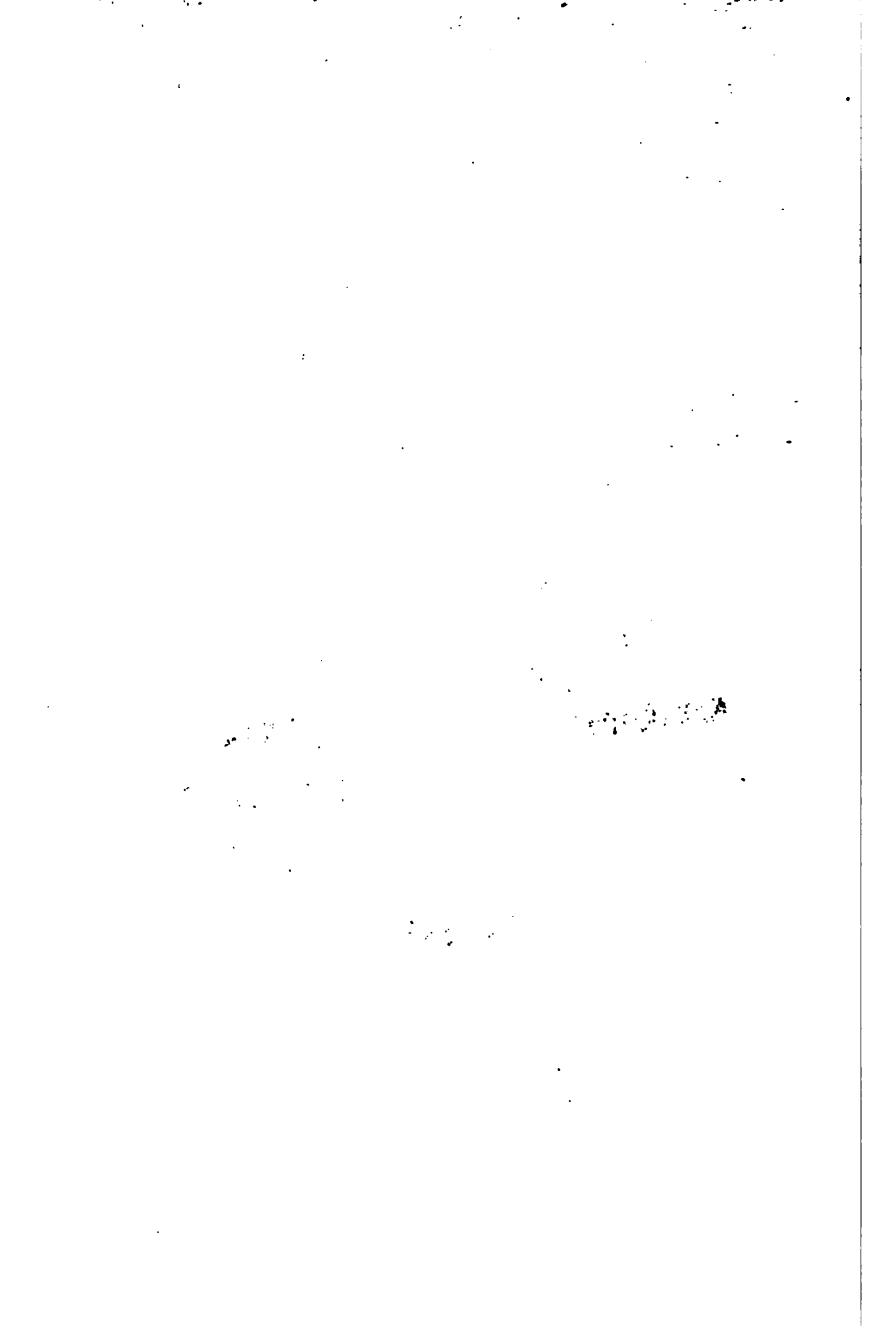
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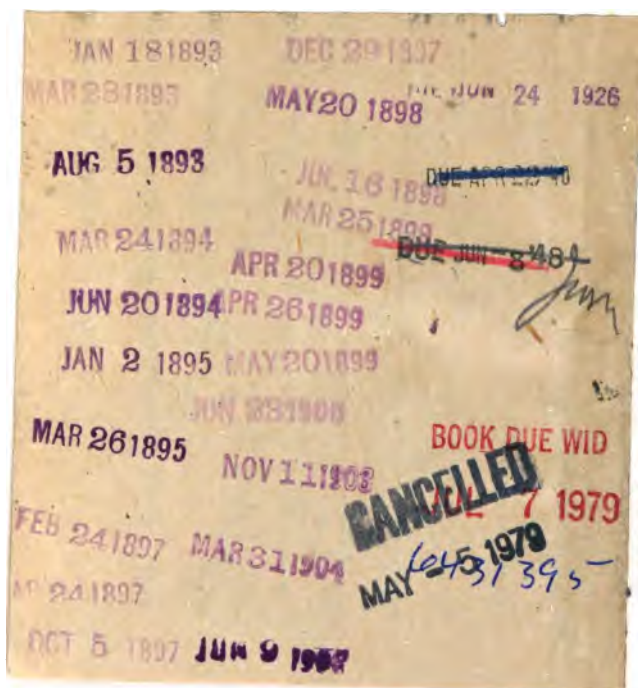
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